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COMMODORE FORCE FULL

ISSUE 7 JULY 1993

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Here he is! Prince of pokes, Champion of cheats, King of end-game sequences.

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Europe's top letter-man with another mound of missives.

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60 PUBLIC SECTOR
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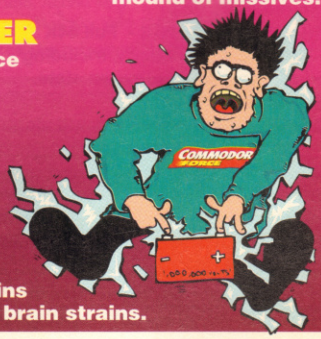

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Win every Zeppelin game ever and copies of their great *Sports* compilation. Wowsers! Now that's what I call a compo.

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Any bits, biffins and C64 related doobries you want — you'll find 'em in the Plaza.

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A taste of what's to come in your fave all-'64 mag.

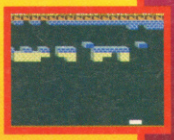
REEL ACTION

Adopt a small yellow balloon as your trademark, burn small hexagonal shapes in stone using a lint-free cloth, then chuck this months tapes in a convenient datasette and get ready for the hottest games action this side of thrillsville.

COMPETITIONS

TRACER
Check the colour, dig the sounds in this game with a difference.

BRIX
Check the colour, dig the sounds.



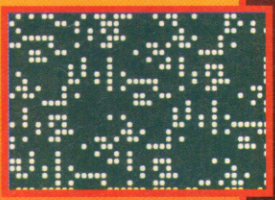
FRANTIC
Check the colour, dig the sounds in this game with a difference.

SPINDIZZY
One of the highest rated games ever (98%) and you've got it for free.

KRACKOUT
Another gun-toting zapperooni to get your itching digits around.

I-BALL
A shoot-'em-up for people with balls, eyes and massive guns.

LIFE
Are you God? Find out with our easy to use life creation simulation.



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Printed in the UK by BPCC Business Magazines (East Kilbride)
Distributed by COMAG ■ ISSN 0967 476X

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impact MAGAZINES
COVER BY Oli 'En Suite' Frey

WHAT'S HA

HERE ARE THE ED LINES

Welcome to the latest issue of the ustoppable COMMODORE FORCE. By now you will have gathered that a sudden price-hike has been thrust upon you, and I'd like to take this opportunity to explain why, exactly, you're being asked to pay (a hardly wallet-busting) four pence more per issue.

It's simple really: free games! Although we've always had the policy of providing our readers with the very best cover-games available each issue, you will no doubt understand that the rights enabling us to feature games belonging to other companies on our Reel Action tapes costs us. A lot.

Fortunately, though, we have just so many dedicated readers that a meagre four pence-a-month each from you lot — an insubstantial sum individually — adds up to a tidy amount in total. Now, we could cynically cream off this extra revenue and claim it as profit, but the whole reasoning behind the increase was to enable us to pay *more* money... for substantially *better* games.

Take this month, for example. We're so confident that enough readers will jump for joy at the prospect of owning three of the very best C64 games *ever produced*, that we've forked-out for 'em in advance. Still, if you're unhappy about it here's your chance to make your feelings known. All you need do is write to Lloyd Mangram and tell him, in 50 words or less, what you would've done with the 4p we've ruthlessly ripped-off you this issue. The best three (as judged by Lloyd) will receive a FREE years subscription to the mag — and if you're already a subscriber then you'll automatically be awarded a year's extension at no extra cost.

In addition, disk users will be pleased to discover that all Reel Action games are still available on disk (see the Reel Action pages for details), and the price is to remain at just £1.49. Now is that a bargain or what? Next month's games are hardly going to be a let-down, either, with a couple of 90 percenters already lined up for inclusion... you'd not only have to be mad to miss it, you'd also have to be pretty sad to boot!

May The Force Be With You,

Steve Shields
Managing Editor

THE BEES KNEES

Winging it's way to a Commodore near you soon is *Bee 52*, a new release from program veterans Code Masters. Set in the insect world (with no relation to the pop group), you get to control a bee on a quest to collect nectar — not only to support your hive, but in order to keep a honey-making firm in business. It looks set to be one of the finest cute-shoot-'em-ups in a long while, with gigantic spiders, slimey slugs and a host of other hostile creepy crawlies to encounter whilst delving into the odd flower to pick up the nectar. *Bee 52* was a successful NES release, and looks set to repeat it's fame on the C64 (anything Nintendo can do, Commodore can...). From what we've witnessed so far, it looks not only graphically excellent (parallax scrolling by the screen-full), but plays mightily impressivly too. You'd be a fool to miss our review next month, so make sure you don't. Bee there or bee round.

THE GANG & THEIR GAMES

WHO

IAN OSBOURNE

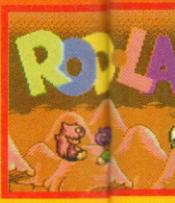
● Trust Ian to swan off on his holidays without writing his bit for Who's Playing What (he's gone camping near Wigan if you're interested, which we dare say you aren't). Ah well, we've had a referendum here at the office, and it has been generally agreed that if Ian were here, what he'd be playing most is, er, well, we're not exactly sure! One thing IS for certain, though, when he returns we'll all be playing the same game... *Hide The Holiday Snaps!*

THE BIG BREAKFAST MASTERBLASTER MAYHEM!

TELEPHONE TIPS

Yo! It's me again, Ben The Boffin with another selection of simply fabulous telephone tips just waiting for your call. With so many smashing games about at the moment, it's been tricky to decide on the four that should be up for nomination. After several hours of stern playtesting (what a carefree life I lead) the following four were selected. So pickup the phone and dial away. Calls cost no more than 10p and the winner will be featured in next months playing tips. Keep on reading, and remember to tune in to THE BIG BREAKFAST's *MasterBlaster* slot, every Monday and Thursday at 7.45am.

See ya!



RODLAND
0839 007

THE ADDAMS FAMILY
0839 007

APPENING?

WHO'S PLAYING WHAT?

MILES GUTTERY

● *Sleepwalker* was a bit of a stormer but it's the fairy-like caperings of *Rodland* that've really got me hooked at the mo'. Life's tranquil, romance is in the air (hopefully), and everything's fresh and lovely. Or perhaps I've been sitting too long in the warm Ludlow sunshine. Hey ho.

CHRIS HAYWARD

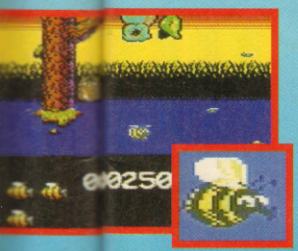
● I've been getting no sleep for days, not just because of my mates German beer but due to *Sleepwalker* being so good. This is no bad thing, but the human body can't survive without sleep, suddenly falling unconscious without prior warning is very rude and… and… zzzzzzzzzzzzz…

JAMES PRICE

● Who's Playing What? Don't you want to hear about my interesting antics? Oh… OK then. *Sleepwalker* and *Spindizzy* have kept me cheerful this month, with *Rodland* creating quite a stir during other quiet moments. Satisfied?

STEVE SHIELDS

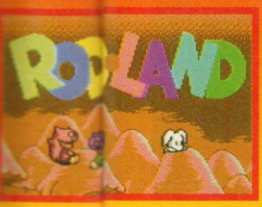
● Despite my somnambulistic leanings, I've only had a few throws on Ocean's excellent C64 *Sleepwalker*. Terrific though the games is, I played the Amiga incarnation to death (and must say this one compares very favourably). No, the game that's grabbed my attention with both hands this ish has to be *Spindizzy* — a firm favourite when first released, I still love it just as much today. Let's hope you do to, eh?



NEW ALTERNATIVES

Film and TV tie-ins are not at all uncommon on any computer format, and the latest set to make '64 debuts are *Suburban Commando* and *Alvin And The Chipmunks*. *Suburban Commando* did the cinema rounds early last year, and although it was slated by the critics, crowds still attended due to the films leading star — wrestling legend Hulk Hogan. It cast The Hulkster as an alien who crash landed in the garden of an everyday American family (if there is such a thing) and followed Hulk causing havoc in the suburbs whilst fighting many of his grappling chums, all gifted with cameo roles. Will *Suburban Commando* find fame on the Commodore? Well, if Hulk can't find it, maybe Alvin, and his friends The Chipmunks can.

We know little as to what structure the game will take just yet, but being based on the popular cartoon show, it should turn out a treat. Perhaps it'll feature the 'munks high-pitched vocal cords — we can only wait and see. Expect full reviews of both *Suburban Commando* and *Alvin And The Chipmunks* as soon as they're released in forthcoming FORCES.



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THE ADDAMS FAMILY
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SLEEP-WALKER
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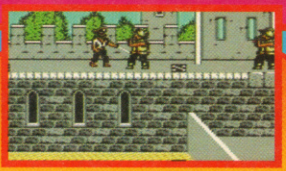

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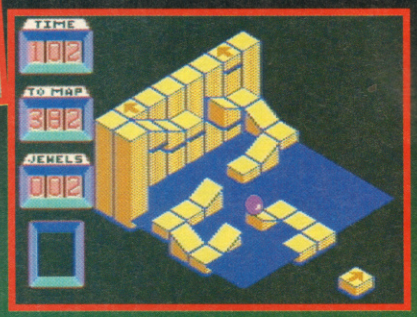
Hey! Two more fantastic tapes, although this month's just *have* to be the best to date. Why look elsewhere when you've some of the best games money can buy on the cover of the fastest-growing Commodore mag? That's right folks — COMMODORE FORCE is *THE* one to look out for and buy. For a start there's...

REEL AC

SPINDIZZY

● Beau Jolly

It's here! One of the best games ever (it scored a huge 98% in ZZAP! 64) is on your covertape, and boy — aren't you the lucky one? There's no plot you need to know of, so let's get straight down to business...



MAP
Press 'M' to display the map. Unexplored areas are marked in red, visited areas in yellow. Any area where a jewel was seen but not collected is marked with a blue 'J'. Press Escape to return to the game.

SCORE
Press 'S' to display your current score at any time during the game.

VIEWPOINT
The cursor arrow keys will alter your viewpoint. The compass in the lower right-hand corner of the screen points North at all times to help with orientation.

ABORT MISSION
Hold the SPACE BAR down until your time runs out.

COLOUR
Press 'C' to toggle between colour and monochrome display mode.

PAUSE
Press 'P' to pause the game. Whilst paused the border will flash — any other key re-starts the action.

EYE STRAIN
Press 'I' to alter GERALD's shape.

STATUS DISPLAY
On the left hand of the screen you'll find the time left to play, the areas left to visit and the number of jewels collected. The box at the bottom shows you which switches are activated.

HINTS

Due east of the starting screen is a beginners section. In this area there are simple demonstration of some playing techniques. Time will run slowly in this area, allowing you time to experiment.

Some screens will give a clue about which switch to activate. This will cause some features to appear or disappear — although occasionally, two switches may need to be used together. The clue appears in the left-hand corner of the screen.

Lifts can be used but may need to be switched on. Ice is slippery and trampolines are bouncy. Make a map; it'll help you find short cuts (as there's quite a few...).

Controls

Use the joystick to control GERALD; pressing the fire button will give extra speed. Pressing the Space Bar will stop your craft on any frictional surface.

DEALS ON REELS!

■ Sick of waiting for cassettes to do their stuff? Despairing at the storage space they need? Wanting this month's Reel Action games to load in next to no time? Why not scoop together your spare change, fill in and cut out this coupon, then send it with a cheque/postal order for £1.49 made payable to Ablex Ltd.

'But where do I send it?' I hear you cry. Don't worry, we were just getting round to that...
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...And verily, did a disk arrive, containing that Reel Action perfection that they craved with such a passion.

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Feel free to send a photocopy if you so wish.

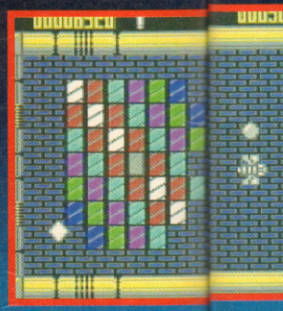
KRACKOUT

● Prism Leisure

It's simple, it's addictive — It's *Krackout*! Yep, it's sideways-on block-busting mayhem aplenty on your covertape this month. Here's a few tips to help you play...

Some bricks roll over when hit to reveal bonuses. The ball must hit this brick to receive the bonus.

THE BONUSES ARE:
G — Glue. Ball sticks to bat.
B — Bomb. Creates an explosion, destroying adjacent blocks.
S — Shield. Makes a barrier appear behind you.
M — Missile. Gives you one

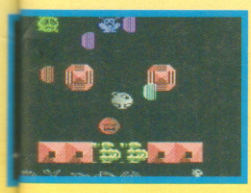


ACTION

I-BALL

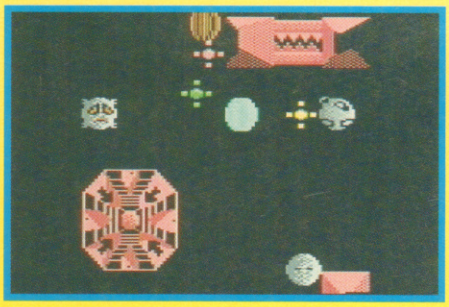
Prism Leisure

The evil Terry Ball has captured your spherical pals — Lover Ball, Eddy Ball, Glow Ball and No Ball. Armed with only a bubble gun, you must enter Terry Ball's domain and struggle through the 16 defence zones. You will find a pal to rescue at the end of every fourth area.



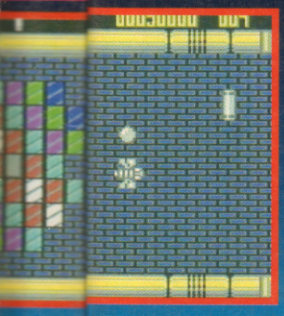
Each level will offer a constant barrage of obstacles — such as glowing ones that are electrified and will frazzle your ball on contact. Terry Ball has also populated these zones with nasties including doughnuts, microwave ovens and roulette wheels. These are harmless when they initially appear, but become highly dangerous once they've started flashing. However, don't despair — succeeding isn't as impossible as it sounds, thanks to the particularly useful Power Disks. If your ball picks one up he will receive either a piece of weaponry or a bonus of some kind. Weaponry is shown as a series of icons to the right of the screen. These are Turbo Boost, Horizontal Laser, Smart Missile, Bullet Spray (front and rear bubble gun), Electro Shield, Laser Spray (left and right lasers), Molecule Bomb (nullifies electrical obstacles), Super Brakes, Laser Cooling Unit and Rainbow Ripple Laser.

When you start the game a Power Disk will instantly appear on the screen. Pick this up for Turbo Boost. Now progress upwards through the first zone. If you let your Bubble Gun fire for too long it will overheat and you'll have to wait for it to cool down; also, every time you die you'll lose a piece of weaponry. As you progress through the levels, Faulty Disks will begin to appear, making movement even harder. Finally, on the 27th Power Disk you'll get the ultimate weapon — the Rainbow Ripple Laser…



Controls

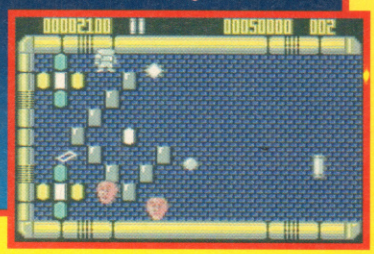
Use the following keys to control your ball:
Z — Left
X — Right
O — Up
K — Down
P — Fire
Alternatively, plug a joystick in port two and use that.
The following keys can only be used if you've collected the relevant piece of weaponry:
Space — Smart Missile
M — Molecule Bomb
Good luck!



missile to fire.
SD — Slow Down. Slows the ball down slightly.
x2 — Times Two. Doubles scoring.
D — Double Bat. Places an additional bat in front of your own, giving limited protection against Aliens.
X — Extra Man. Gives you an extra life.
E — Extension. It's huge, it's powerful, it's a bigger bat!

Controls

Plug joystick in port two, and remember to feed the goldfish.



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SPINDIZZY
KRACKOUT
LIFE
I BALL

REEL ACTION #13

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COMMODORE FORCE

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EASY LIVES
BRIX
TRACER

REEL ACTION #14

COMMODORE FORCE REEL ACTION #14

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COMMODORE FORCE REEL ACTION #13

SPINDIZZY
Dizzy, I'm so dizzy! Your head will definitely spin with this timeless '64 classic.

I BALL
I came, I saw, I Ball!

KRACKOUT
There's a bat, a ball, and a whole lot more!

LIFE
The dull bit between birth and death? No way! Load up and find the ultimate answer.

TAPE INFO

- Spindizzy
- I Ball
- Krackout
- Life

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

Follow the loading instructions in your C64 manual. Lost your manual? No problem — Hit SHIFT & RUN/STOP, and press play.

DODGY DUPLICATION?

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COMMODORE FORCE REEL ACTION #14

FRANTIC
In space, no-one can hear you scream. In *Frantic*, no-one will resist having another go.

BRIX
Smash up the walls in this highly addictive demolition derby.

TRACER
Lashings of colour and pounding sound-tracks. Philip Nicholson's amazing creation.

EASY LIVES
Got a game problem? Then let our agony aunt John Wells

TAPE INFO

- Frantic
- Brix
- Tracer
- Easy Lives

LOADING INSTRUCTIONS

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DODGY DUPLICATION?

If your tape ain't up to scratch, send it to: Ablex Audio Video Ltd, Harcourt, Halesfield 14, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 4QD

BRIX

• DataSphere Publications

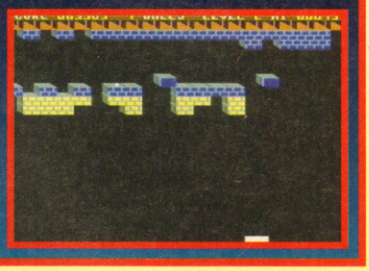
We've all played some form of *Breakout* variant before now; here's your chance to sample another. However, this time there's a few complications to contend with.

How do think you can cope with waves of advancing bricks? Not too well? What about the 'bat' that shrinks between levels? Or the ball that gathers momentum in a worryingly short time? If the answer is 'erm, is that the time? Really, I'd better nip off home' then you'd better get practicing. Slam your joystick into port two, and get ready to rock and roll.

Note: It's probably not such a good idea to participate in the slamming of joystick ports, and Impact Magazines takes no responsibility for any damage inflicted on innocent '64s. Just play the game, eh?

Controls

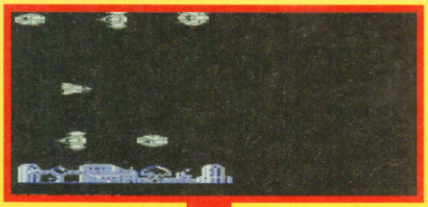
If you need to be told how, you obviously don't know a thing about computers — and you probably have a dog that owns a Vic 20.



TRACER

• Philip Nicholson

Just look at that! Intense colour graphics that are destined to send your eyeballs on an astral travel they won't ever forget! Not only that, but your ears can join in the *Tracer* sensation too! With a choice of four superb thumping sound-tracks, every cochlea present will be jumping and a leaping. Get hold of a joystick and blast those multi-coloured waves of nasties 'till your retinas can take no more. COMMODORE FORCE reader Philip Nicholson displays the C64 graphical capabilities to it's limits.



FRANTIC

• DataSphere Publications

There's no plot, few complications and one hell of a fast moving shoot-'em-up here in the oh-so wonderful form of *Frantic*. Controlling your spacecraft is simplicity itself; so instinctive you'll almost fall over yourself to conserve your limited supply of energy and lives. Shooting the assorted nasties will also have a fantastic effect on your life; who knows, maybe this is the catalyst that will bring world peace for everything from little fluffy animals to jungle-stomping rhinos. Or something...

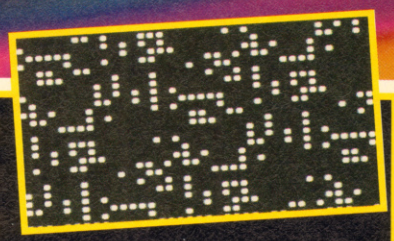
Controls

Joystick in port two — the rest is up to you.

DODGY DUPLICATION

In the unlikely event that your Reel Action tapes fail to work, please refrain from sending them back to us. After all, we only feed them to Milo (our Editorial Assistant) and he's getting too fat by half. Instead, bung them in a secure envelope and post them to: I Think This One's Broken, Ablex Audio Video, Harcourt, Halesfield 14, Telford, Shropshire TF7 4QD. They'll test it and (if necessary) send you a replacement. Yahoo!

LIFE



• DataSphere Publications

FOUR SIMPLE RULES OF LIFE

Life applies four simple rules to govern birth and death in an imaginary two-dimensional population. All the player does is set up the starting conditions and then watch as the population patterns and numbers change from generation to generation. What makes the game strangely addictive is that a slight change in the starting conditions can have a profound effect upon the outcome of the game.

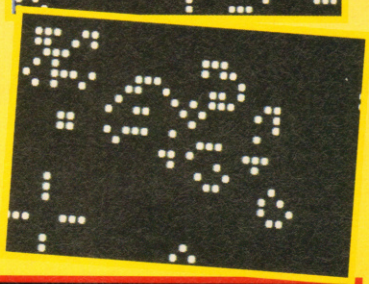
A population is made up of individual cells which live and die as follows:

1) If a cell has two or three neighbours, it lives on.
2) If it has one or no neighbours, it dies of loneliness.
3) If it has more than three neighbours it dies of suffocation.
4) If an empty cell space has exactly three neighbours, a new cell is born and grows in that space.

All that is required of you is to enter the pattern of cells using any letter of the alphabet and then press the Return key to see how your population develops. You can figure the rest out for yourself. Have fun!

Controls

Run/Stop — Enter editor
Return — Commence *Life*
F1 — Generate random population
Clr/Home + Shift — Clear Screen
Space Bar — Pause



What a guy, what a game, what a fast-paced blasting binge!

Controls

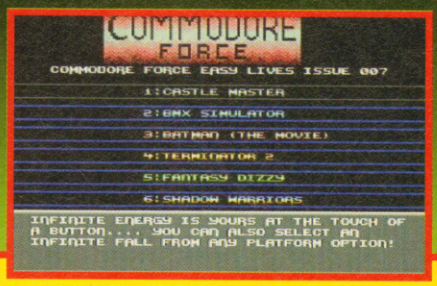
Plug joystick in port two — and prepare for enjoyment.

EASY LIVES

• The COMMODORE FORCE game tamer.

John Wells returns with another plethora of handy pokes and cheats. On this month's instalment we've even got two amazing music hacks! Load it up to see (and hear) it all for yourself…

Expect to see the following: *Castle Master*, *BMX Simulator*, *Batman The Movie*, *Terminator 2*, *Fantasy World Dizzy* and *Shadow Warriors*. For an extra tip, hit the Commodore key. Marvel, take note and press RUN/STOP to exit.



GET A PIECE OF THE ACTION!

We've no doubt that you're impressed with this month's bumper helping of Reel Action, but do you think you're capable of better? Could you be the one to create another *Spindizzy*-style classic? Or perhaps a marvellous curio such as *Life*? If you think you've got a game up to our usual high standards, fill in this form and send it with you're cassette and disk. Who knows, fame and international stardom (not to mention universal acclaim) could be yours…

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SLEEPWALK

● Ocean, Cassette £10.99, Disk £15.99

COMMODORE FORCE HURRICANE HIT!

The subject of dreams is one that's forever researched. Why do we have them and what do they mean? CHRIS 'DREAM-BOAT' HAYWARD wakes up to reality...

Sadly, full price games seem few and far between for the '64. Just take a gander at the charts to see for yourself — budget domination, big time. With several new releases being nothing but hot air, I awaited *Sleepwalker* with baited breath. Could it prove to be a full-pricer to rank along side many legendary titles of old? Much to my extreme delight, *Sleepwalker* is truly brilliant, the programmers deserve a hearty slap on the back, and no mistake. Why is it so startling? Sit back, relax, and I'll begin...

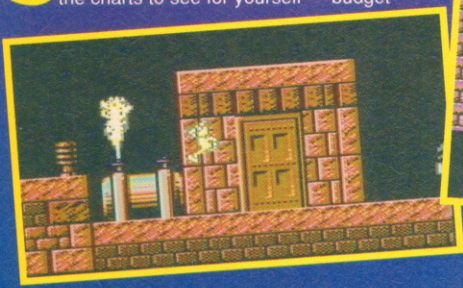
At a glance little Lee is an average healthy youngster, but every night while his fellow friends are safely tucked up in bed, Lee has a tendency to sleepwalk — heavily! Walking around at night completely oblivious to the surrounding world is more than a little risky, but fortunately for Lee, he has a very loyal dog. So loyal, in fact, that he's prepared to get chewed, fried, and beaten up, all to protect Lee from harm. This may sound quite barbaric (I can foresee animal rights activists assembling banners at this very moment) but guiding Lee around the multidirectionally-scrolling landscapes is the main ingredient from which fun is provided.

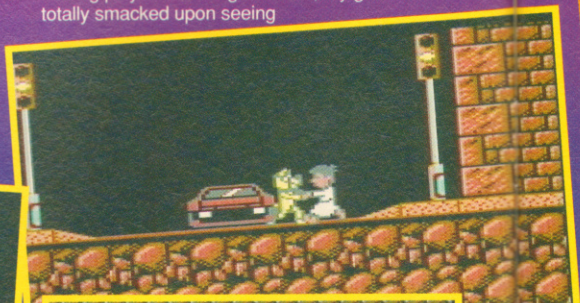
Taking control of Ralph, the ever obedient canine, you must prevent the fair-haired youngster from the many pitfalls that await him in the outside world. There are stacks of perils; cars, elephants and bouncers to name but a few, with the most harmful obstacle being large expanses of water. Lee never stops walking, and to ensure he doesn't fall down the many gaps, you can either kick him over them or hang in gaps to form a canine bridge. Any nasties in the way can be thwacked on the head thanks to Ralph's trusty baseball bat, allowing Lee to pass unharmed. It all sounds very complex, but plays like a dream thanks to an excellent control method.

Sleepwalker has a little something for everyone

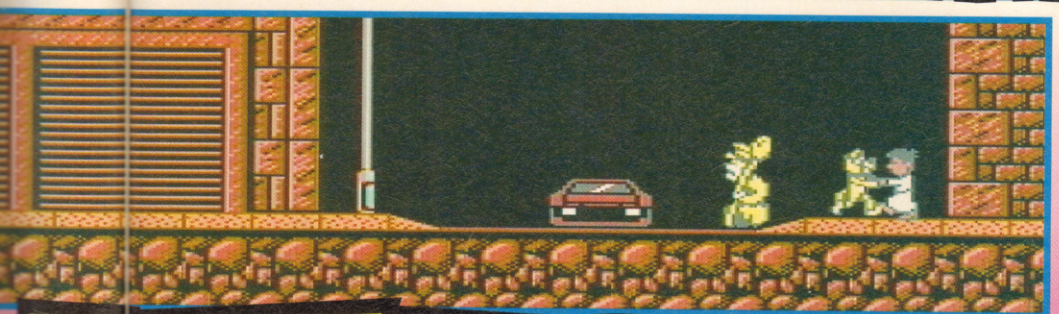
Wakey Wakey!

Having played the Amiga version, my gob was totally smacked upon seeing



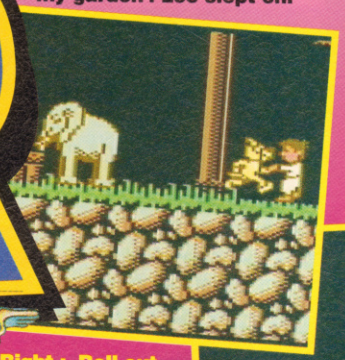


● Ralph and Lee dance the night away on a one way elevator to heaven.



LKER

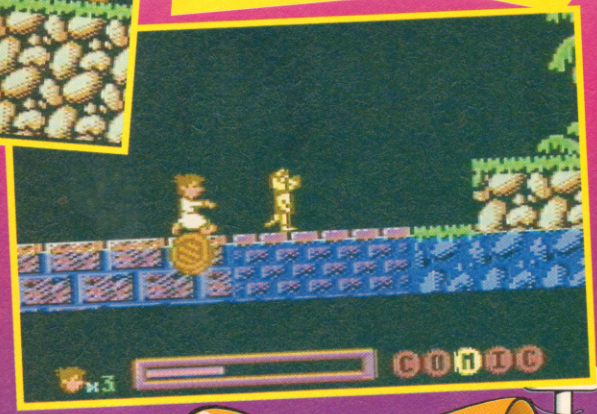
● Below: 'Odd' mused Ralph as he passed — 'An elephant in my garden'. Lee slept on.



IAN!

● We were biting our nails when this one came in. What would we do if it stank? It's for charity, so if we slated it they'd call us a bunch of uncaring drongos, but if we lied about it we'd be cheating our loyal readership. What a dilemma! Thankfully, Ocean let us off the hook by producing one of the finest C64 games in many a year. The graphics and animation are superb, with detailed backdrops and cutsie comedy characters, and the gameplay is extremely original. My only criticism is that it's impossible for the pooch to do a small jump. A mere tap of the fire button sends Ralph hurtling through the air, even if a little leap over Lee is all that's required. Still, this is a minor moan — the game's great!

91%



● Right : Roll out the barrel, roll on the barrel, fall off the barrel, all with your eyes tight shut. Sounds like a typical Saturday night for the C-Force gang.

the C64 rendition. It's so similar, and being as the 16-bitter is such a classic, that's no bad thing. Each level is simply massive, encouraging exploration to it's fullest. The variety of nasties and treacherous obstacles to navigate around is unbelievable; they're not the same sprites with colour differences, but all individual characters with unique traits. Monkeys throw coconuts, snakes smash you against trees, with each being quite hilarious to watch with many of Lee's lives being sacrificed in the process. Initially the controls are very tricky to get accustomed to, but after a while it becomes second nature. This provides a nice difficulty curve and ties in with the already-steep level complexity. Level One is no mean feat, but the essential addictive elements guarantee you'll be craving another go. One slight omission is being unable to call up a map screen to show your whereabouts. Because of each sections bulbous size, it's far too easy to get totally lost. Still, finding your bearings and acting accordingly expands the game even more — usually, just when you give up all hope of finding the exit, you stumble across a certified winning route. *Sleepwalker* has a little something for everyone; be it arcade or puzzlement that you hanker for, this'll fill the gap to the point of overflow.

In these days, when the '64 is shunned by many gamers and companies alike, it's comforting to see that excellent software can still be produced. If you want to see what the 8-bit wonder can accomplish, wipe your bleary eyes and experience a masterpiece.

JAMES!

● Even though the tie-in with Comic Relief may be (almost) obsolete due to it's late arrival, C64 *Sleepwalker* is one of the best (and most original) games I've played in a long time. Guiding Lee through Kipsville and beyond is a delight everyone should experience; the aspects that made the Amiga version so enjoyable are present in all their glory. If I had to make a criticism, it would be the sad absence of level codes — ploughing through earlier levels could become tedious after a while. Secondly, the cassette multiload is a hassle, but my usual hatred of tape access is considerably reduced by the sheer quality of the proceedings.
If you're going to invest a few pennies on a full-price game, get *Sleepwalker*. Games of this quality are few and far between and, despite a few minor flaws, it's a top-notch piece of software.

91%

CHRIS! 93%

GALE WARNING

■ PRESENTATION ■ POLISHED, ENCOURAGING INTRO	88%
■ GRAPHICS ■ COMICAL (RELIEF), VIBRANT THROUGHOUT	90%
■ SOUND ■ SIMPLE BUT APPROPRIATE FX	88%
■ HOOKABILITY ■ A RELENTLESS BRAIN-TEASE FROM THE START	92%
■ LASTABILITY ■ INFURIATINGLY HARD TO PUT DOWN	94%

FORCE FACTOR 92%

JAMESY AND SMILES CHART CHATTER

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JAMESY: Hello and welcome to the last-ever edition of cheese and ham bagels monthly!
SMILES: That's right mate. It's good-bye, farewell, erm, so long…
JAMESY: Hang on though — isn't this *Street Fighter 2*? I don't think *that* would make a good sandwich filling. Neither would it's less-than-boniferous…
SMILES: Boniferous isn't a word mate!
JAMESY: It is when you catch your leg in a door, Smiles. It's as thoroughly unpleasant as an afternoon eating a *Terminator 2* side-salad.
SMILES: Salad is a good sandwich filling isn't it?
JAMESY: It certainly is mate! Especially with a little of that yummy *Rainbow Islands* dressing. It's certainly MY number 15 — in fact, I think I'll go get one now…
(Sounds of Jamesy leaving room)
SMILES: Wow, that's amusingsaladpunominal. I'm spellbound, almost *Dizzy*. What a great guy. I think I'll have a s*Arnie 2*.
(Muffled sound of talking from other room.)
JAMESY: Would you mind opening the door for me, mate? My hands are as full as a little dog after eating several large forests.
(Smiles goes to open door)
SMILES: Aargh, boniferous! I've caught me leg in the door mate…
JAMESY: …and I've dropped my oh-so tasty snack. Doesn't life *SUECK* sometimes?
SMILES: Don't worry '64 slinkers — things'll get better as *Souness Heroquest*'s some more food.
(Cue canned laughter)
JAMESY: See you next month, FORCE-fans…

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SLOTS O

With over 160 coin-op conversions available for the C64, we thought it prudent to separate this mega-feature across two issues. This months section is brought to you by JAMES 'CHANGE IN HIS POCKETS' PRICE, the letters A to L and the number 74...

720°
● US Gold

This isometric skateboarding game caused quite a stir in the arcades with it's simplistic (but enjoyable) gameplay and scintillating rock soundtrack. On the C64 though, the wheel-related madness is hampered by an all-too-easy difficulty level and a lack of variation.

Gameplay-wise, it involves little more than collecting cash strewn around the 3D playing area. Once enough is amassed you can visit one of four skate parks, located on the edge of town. When you've done this a few times and beaten the time limit (didn't I mention that?) there's little else to do; subsequently, tedium rapidly sets in...

65%

1942
● Encore

Old it may be, but *1942* is still a prime example of the classic shoot-'em-up. There's none of your flashy (but useless) power-ups here; just endless, frenetic blasting. Sadly unavailable these days, you'd be particularly lucky to find a copy, and even the arcade machine has disappeared into obscurity. Who knows, maybe it'll appear on a compilation...

68%

1943
● Kixx

It's predecessor may have given pleasure to the masses, but *1943* is every bit as horrific as the war it's subject time played host to. Dull sprites, appallingly short levels and sheer mindless tedium helps to make a duffer you'll want to forget.

I suppose you could take solace from the fact that it's inspirational coin-op was a little on the unremarkable side, but that doesn't excuse faults in the parallax (i.e. islands move as fast as clouds). I'm just off to jump up and down on the tape that it's code is contained on, but I'll leave you with this message; don't buy it, it sucks.

46%

AAARGH!
● Melbourne House

Dodgy collision detection and feeble gameplay make this monster-bashing game's title particularly apt. Losing the arcade original's two-player mode cuts half the fun; having the rest converted so badly doesn't help either. Sadly, *AAARGH!* is a game for very patient and forgiving fire breathing monsters.

21%

ACTION FIGHTER
● US Gold

This dull *Spy Hunter* variant does little to quicken the pulse and, having never seen the obscure coin-op, I can't comment on the accuracy of the conversion. I can say the C64 version is particularly dire though, and I doubt I'd line my cat's litter tray with it.

28%

ALIEN STORM
● US Gold

I've got to admit that I didn't really like the arcade machine, and so I wasn't expecting much from the C64 conversion. How deluded I was! Either I didn't look close enough originally, or the trusty Commodore has excelled itself again...

In terms of gameplay, it's VERY similar to *Golden Axe*, with fair graphics and sonics, but it's the two-player mode in which *Alien Storm* shines. Running through horizontally-scrolling levels and shooting things is tremendous fun, and even the *Operation Wolf* sub-level is praiseworthy.

I'll recommend it on the strength of the disk version, but tape owners beware — the multi-load is like a hefty piece of fruit cake after granny's Sunday lunch (or something).

76%

ALIEN SYNDROME
● The Edge

Alien Syndrome is a corking game even to this day. Stomping around the scrolling levels and rescuing hostages is compulsive fun; get a friend to join in and you've a monster of a two-player game. Both graphically and sonically excellent, you'd be hard pushed to find many conversions to rival it — it's almost a perfect replica of the original.

84%

AFTERBURNER
● The Hit Squad

Converting the graphical excellence that played such an integral part in it's arcade parents success was bound to be a tricky task, but nothing prepared me for *this* disaster. Diabolical graphics, mind numbing gameplay and insipid sound makes a mockery of the C64's abilities from it's SID chip to it's shift keys. Having seen the passable (enjoyable, even) action that the Spectrum version had to offer, I'm particularly disappointed by this and I can guarantee you will be too. Avoid.

23%

ALTERED BEAST
● The Hit Squad

The coin-op wasn't exactly the best I've played, and the C64 version is marginally more dire because of: a — sluggish controls b — infuriating gameplay and c — both of the previous multiplied by three. The horizontally scrolling gameplay is made slightly more enjoyable by the addition of a two-player option, but even this becomes tiresome after a while. Even the arcades novelty mutation sequences are missing; and the multiload's a pain in the backside. To summarise, it's just too beastly by half.

41%

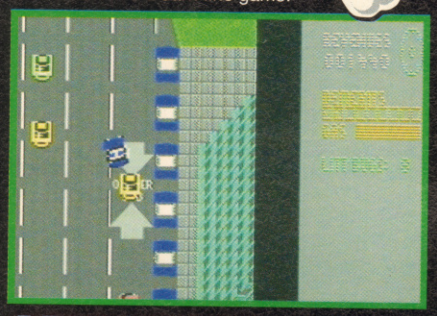
OF FUN!

APB
● The Hit Squad

APB's multidirectional, criminal-bustin' gameplay turned a fair few heads on it's first release; even now, it rarely fails to impress. Controlling one certain Officer Bob, you're given a set amount of crooks to catch during an allocated time limit. This can be done by racing up to them, and turning on your siren. Once the days quota has been captured, it's just a simple trip back to the station for the next batch of orders. It's not *that* easy though, as missing crooks, running out of time and crashing your car all result in demerits. Get too many, and it's game over as Bob's fired from the force.

Granted, the graphics are a little blocky and the soundtrack could do with a good boot up the speakers, but it's still an admirable conversion and a darn fine game.

82%



ARKANOID
● The Hit Squad

Block-busting wonder or mindless drudgery? I'd say it's somewhere in between, but the basic left right and (occasionally) fire gameplay leaves a lot to be desired at times.

For example, the ball you're trying to keep moving either moves way too fast or far too slow. This makes the game both infuriating and boring — so why's it so addictive? Lots of people loved it (and still do) but it's definitely an all-or-nothing game, and no amount of power-ups can hide the prehistoric design.

66%

BADLANDS
● The Hit Squad

Badlands is a lot better than it's predecessor (namely *Super Sprint*) but it's ridiculous difficulty curve makes a mockery of the racing/blasting action. The tracks are displayed using a birds-eye view, and there's some great background graphics, but the thing is, it's so easy to beat your computer opponents at first, and too difficult after a while. The two-player option acts as a partial remedy; but don't they always?

It's at home the most on budget, where it's enjoyable (but limited) gameplay is both cheap and cheerful; something for a rainy day, perhaps?

69%

BIONIC COMMANDO
● Capcom/Go!

Swinging around in the trees may not be everyone's ideal cup of tea, but *Bionic Commando* does it with style. With five levels of extending-arm madness to plough through, it's both tricky and enjoyable; there's also a superlative soundtrack accompanying the action.

On the negative side, the graphics are a trifle shoddy, and your character seems partial to falling through platforms every now and again. These are by no means terrible flaws; merely annoying as they detract from such a great concept. Also, the pace tends to be a little pedestrian at times but, again, this doesn't ruin the game in the way you'd expect.

That bionic arm really is cool though. Just think of the pints you could pinch with it...

79%

BLACK TIGER
● US Gold

Power-ups and large scrolling areas make this conversion of the little known coin-op a hit from the outset. Smart graphics and sound contribute equally to the well-paced action, and the clever level design make this a must-buy for action and adventure fans.

There's a steady difficulty curve incorporated, meaning you get that little bit further every time you play, but occasionally, the control method's a little unfair. Nevertheless, it's still very close to it's subject matter and an enjoyable way to pass the time.

84%

BLASTEROIDS
● Imageworks

Can anyone remember *Asteroids*? Of course you can, but would you play it these days?

That's why *Blasteroids* is such a perplexing game. It's a development on the aeons-old theme that almost, but not quite, makes the grade. As a conversion, it's top notch, with nigh-on everything it's subject matter had to offer. Unfortunately, it didn't have that much to start with, and no amount of power-ups or two-player options can compensate for a phenomenal lack of depth. If you liked the arcade machine it's a worthwhile purchase, but brace yourself for a two-day wonder and little more.

64%

BOMB JACK
● Encore

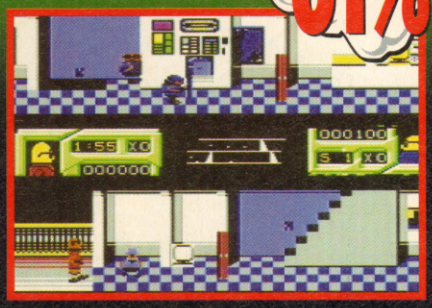
It's simple, bomb-disposal gameplay made *Bombjack* worth the odd ten-pee in the arcades, but on the C64 a great deal of the charm seems to have disappeared. Clearing screen after screen of fizzing explosives soon becomes tedious; the occasionally frustrating nature of the gameplay doesn't warrant brownie points either.

51%

BONANZA BROS
● US Gold

The arcade version may have been novel and original, but the C64 version fails to duplicate this because of awful graphics and poor controls. At it's best with two players, *Bonanza Bros* is a split-screen robberama where you control two robots attempting to outwit various security devices and steal valuable objects. It's a tricky business but, as I've already said, it's let down by some annoying flaws. Not the best conversion ever — there are worse, though…

61%



BREAKTHRU
● US Gold

Shoddy graphics and nonexistent gameplay make this disastrous conversion a game you'll wish you'd missed. As well as being horizontally scrolling action of the most awful kind, it's also puzzling that the developers would make such a diabolical game out of a limited (and tedious) coin-op.

11%

BUBBLE BOBBLE
● Hit Squad

Bub and Bob's first computer outing is one of the C64's most classic arcade romps. Controlling one of two lovable (?!) dragons, you have to trap screen after screen of nasties by blowing bubbles at them and encapsulating them. After you've done that, there's only the matter of popping the bubble and weeee! away they go.

It's simplistic platform action has to be played to be believed, and the two-player option is just manna from heaven. If you haven't got it yet, then now's the time to do so — you'll have missed out if you don't…

92%

BUGGY BOY
● Encore

This novel racing game game succeeds in doing what others in this genre failed — making a driving game drive (if you see what I mean). Colourful graphics and varied tracks add a great deal to playability; what's more, you get a real sense of achievement from beating the tight time limits. A classic.

90%

CABAL
● The Hit Squad

Although it lacks the simultaneous two-player option that added so much to the gameplay, this frenetic *Op-Wolf* variant is still one of the best shooting-gallery games ever. Clearing static screens of enemy forces is very addictive; further attractions include collectable weaponry and destructible scenery. What's more, it's available on budget — and at £3.99, it's a steal.

81%

CHASE HQ
● The Hit Squad

While the Spectrum version of *Chase HQ* is one of the best games Sir Clive Sinclair could ever have hoped for, the C64 incarnation is a joke — lacking speed, features and consequentially gameplay. Apprehending criminals is a dull affair, and the dire graphics do little to remedy this. Sad, but true.

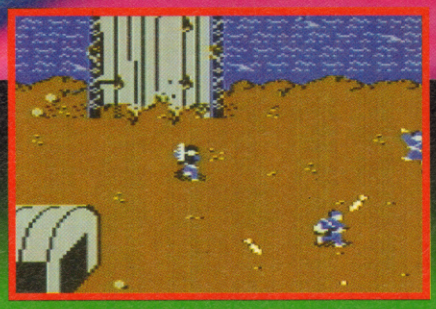
42%

CISCO HEAT
● Imageworks

A race between police across San Francisco? Sounds like a poor plot for a poor product — typical contrived arcade drudgery, I thought (and expected).

As well as being undoubtably one of the worst games I've had to play while researching this feature, it's also the most awful, excuse of a racer I've had the misfortune to play so far. Terrible graphics, mind-numbingly bad sound and nonexistent gameplay help to make a game to give a nice, warm glow in your tummy — if you don't own it, that is…

7%



COMMANDO
● Encore

Commando's not a film licence (as some dolts would have you believe) but a right storming shoot-'em-up that attracted many a fan in the arcades, and quite a few on the C64. Despite being a 'one man against an army' game, it was one of the first to appear and has spawned many a derivative product.

While it lacks a consecutive two-player option and the graphics are beginning to show their age, it's still an enjoyable and challenging blast. The horizontal action is relentless in it's intensity, and the icing on the cake is that it makes a mockery of a few too many games of late — even though it was released during the early days of the Commodore.

77%

CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
● Mastertronic Plus

Continental Circus is one of the best arcade racers money can buy. It's also been on Reel Action (issue 1 to be precise) so I recommend you get a back issue now!

The game itself is a multi-track racer with a time limit to beat and a host of other cars to beat before advancing onto the next area. The arcade machine was brilliant, and the C64 does it proud.

Hallelujah.

86%

CRYSTAL CASTLES
● US Gold

To put it bluntly, *Crystal Castles* is nothing more than a glorified isometric 3D Pac-Man. The gameplay is subsequently tedious and lacking any long-term interest. What more need I say?

32%

COMBAT SCHOOL
● Ocean

Joystick wagglers aren't my idea of a good time. I happen to be quite attached to my right arm, and abusing it in such a fashion doesn't strike me as being wise. Combat school is (quelle surprise) a game that requires lots of rapid joystick movement, and the occasional bit of skilful timing. It's true that when you disregard the shooting range sections, there's little different than the sports orientated (but ultimately similar) *Track and Field* or *Hyper Sports*. Even the militaristic theme is a little stale and only really affects the graphics, but with a nifty two player option and moderately fair difficulty curve, you'll find the genre has offered far worse before now.

69%

CRACKDOWN
● Kixx

Despite it's initially good reception, I've always felt *Crackdown* is little more than a souped-up *Gauntlet*. The split-screen action is innovative, and a welcome touch, but the maze orientated gameplay will leave you cold after a while. Try first — buy later. Maybe.

74%

DONKEY KONG
● Imagine

As old as the hills (although a little bit browner), *Donkey Kong* was a revelation in it's time, although these days it's basic platform gameplay leaves a lot to be desired. I've never liked it — and I doubt I ever will.

32%

DOUBLE DRAGON
● Mastertronic Plus

Double Dragon is one of my all-time favourite arcade machines. It's ironic that the one game I'd appreciate being converted properly is one of the worst to soil the '64 to date. Tiny (and badly drawn) sprites, the absence of major features, appallingly slow multiload; need I go on? The programmers should be flogged to death with scented bootlaces, strung up on a tree with banana skins and soaked in pineapple juice.

12%

DOUBLE DRAGON 2
● Virgin

The arcade machine was quite stunningly close to it's predecessor; to the point, in fact, that you could say it was the same basic code with alternative graphics. Thankfully, the same cannot be said about the C64 conversions, as *DD2* is far better than it's (particularly dire) predecessor.

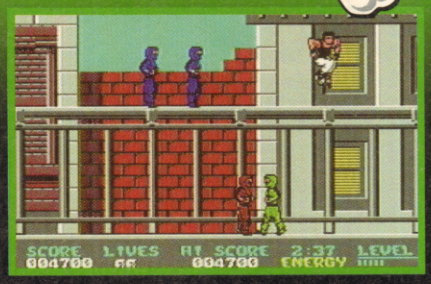
Essentially a beat-'em-up, it throws you (and a friend, if you've got one) into the path of many a hefty thug. These can be dispatched by using a variety of fighting moves, and if you're clever you can collect weapons to make life easier. It's not the best example of the genre, but then again it's by no means the worst — especially with the two player option.

76%

DRAGON BREED
● Activision

Dragon Breed's a pretty straightforward shoot-'em-up with the only innovation being the dragon with it's shimmering (although some would say flickering) tail. Once you've got over this novelty, you start to notice the average nature of the gameplay, and the terrible multiload. From thereon, it's downhill...

61%



DRAGON NINJA
● The Hit Squad

When a game is converted, some elements have to be left out; after all, with the C64 you're having to deal with Kilobytes as in contrast to the originals reams of Megabytes. With *Dragon Ninja* (or *Bad Dudes*, depending on which side of the Atlantic you're on) it was the two player option.

The game's nothing remarkable designwise — simply a multi-level beat-'em-up with lots of people to hit and spread all over the horizontally-scrolling play area. Sadly, most of the moves are redundant as you only need to hit most assailants once; after three or four levels you also begin to notice a distinct lack of variation. To make matters worse, the controls are awkward to handle at times, resulting in all manner of teeth-grinding.

67%

DRAGON SPIRIT
● Domark

With some of tackiest graphics seen on the '64 and mind numbingly boring gameplay, *Dragon Spirit* is one of those games that makes you want to stop writing and go for a lie down.

14%

DRAGONS' LAIR
● Encore

This is the first of the two games it took to convert *Dragons Lair* from it's laser-disc coin-op home (the second one being *Escape from Singe's Castle*).

Unfortunately, it's not half as good as *Escape*, with a hefty multiload and less playability. If you want arcade cartoon fun, you know which one to go for — *Dragon's Lair* is a massive disappointment.

34%

DYNASTY WARS
● US Gold

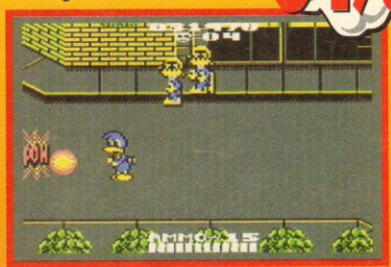
Repetitive gameplay and a lack of any *real* gameplay make this Capcom/US Gold game one to miss. The one man against a million theme, although usually meaning nothing, is curiously apt here; knock one guy down, then another and another... and boy, do you get bored? Ant-stampingly so, I can assure you!

46%

DYNAMITE DUX
● Activision

Resembling a cutesy *Double Dragon* with projectile weapons and weird assailants, you'd think *Dynamite Dux* would be a real laugh. To a certain extent it is, but the unsatisfying and repetitive gameplay that made the arcade machine so unremarkable is blatantly apparent without the formers flashy graphics. Ultimately, this proves to be the game's downfall.

64%



EMPIRE STRIKES BACK
● Domark

The second in the Star Wars trilogy is by far the best, with four levels of (moderately speedy) wire-frame madness. Unfortunately, it's way too easy to complete; and after you've done so there's little to keep you occupied.

63%

ENDURO RACER
● The Hit Squad

Little Miss Muffet
Sat on her tuffet
Eating her curds and whey
When along came
Enduro Racer
Said 'dog tree ham facer'

I never could write poetry, you know.

16%

ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

● The Hit Squad

This two-player isometric save-'em-up recieved varied reviews on it's initial release. A few years later, and I think the game is still a marvellous way to pass the time — especially with the two-player option. Liberating helpless individuals from the nasties suggested by the (long) title provides lots of long-term entertainment — and at the budget price it now resides at, it's a steal.

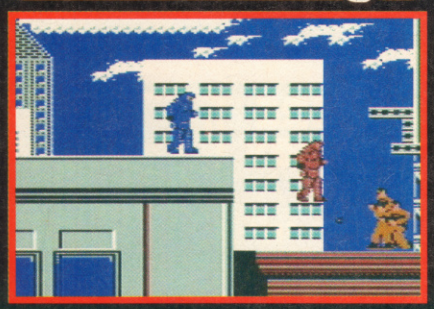
83%

ESCAPE FROM SINGE'S CASTLE

● Encore

Contrary to what certain people would have you belive, *Escape* isn't the sequel to *Dragons Lair* — in fact, it's the second part! Rather than put the whole game together on one set of cassettes or disks, Elite (the original publishers) separated various key sections from the laser-disk coin-op and made two separate games. *Escape* is by far the better of the two, with flowing gameplay, excellent sonics and not a penguin to be seen but I'd still only recommend the disk version; the multiload sucks…

81%

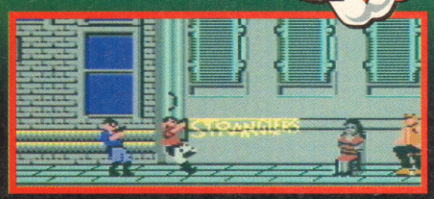


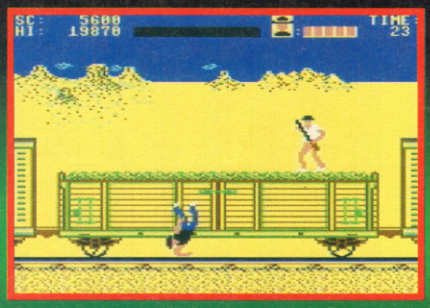
ESWAT

● US Gold

Oh dear! It's a poor quality game in a similar mould to *Shinobi* — but by no means as good. Diabolical on the Spectrum, *ESWAT* is far better on the C64 but there's still a terrible lack of gameplay. The action is tiresome and derivative, the control methods tricky and the only real noteworthy feature is the attempts at parallax scrolling in later levels.

49%





EXPRESS RAIDER

● US Gold

Blocky graphics and poor aural effects do little to elevate this train-robbing game above mediocre. The gameplay's simple and basically involves beating up and dodging various opponents and projectiles respectively. Interest is added in the form of a shooting sub-level, where you ride a horse alongside a train and attempt to shoot it's hostile passengers; sadly, even this becomes tiresome after a while.

It's different, but sadly originality doesn't necessarily make an enjoyable game. 'One from the vaults', as the great Frank n Furter would say…

50%

FIGHTING SOCCER

● Activision

Fighting Soccer? I'd say the only fighting THIS game would involve is when you go back to the shop after buying it, and punch your friendly retailer on the nose. Not that it would help much; *FS* is one of the most ridiculous footy games out, and even it's snazzy presentation can do little too disguise the fact. I can almost picture the poor souls that bought it, lamenting 'we where robbed, Greavsie'…

14%

FLYING SHARK

● Firebird

Nope, it's not Jaws with a jet-pack; merely an average vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up that was far better on the Spectrum. On the '64 it is, as I've already said, average.

50%

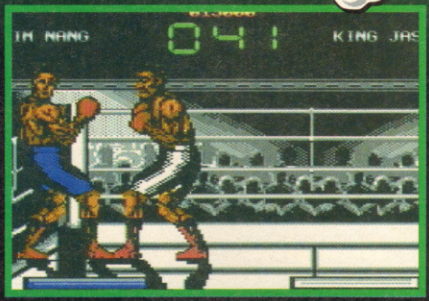
FINAL FIGHT

● US Gold

Shock! Horror! The mayor's daughter has been captured by the evil Mad Gear gang, and must be rescued by her former street-fighting father (and a friend).

Well she can sod off as far as I'm concerned. Despite the two-player mode and large amounts of levels, I'm not going to play this just to help some poor kidnapped soul. I'd sooner spend a night with one of Miles' teddy bears (and that's saying something!).

16%



FINAL BLOW

● Storm

Huge sprites boxing frantically? Well, perhaps that's the case, but only for the thirty seconds that it takes to deck your opponent. *Final Blow* is so easy that you can't fail to win — and ultimately, this gives the game a half an hour life-span, before it falls ungracefully to the flaw (sorry, floor).

19%

FORGOTTEN WORLDS

● US Gold

Forgotten Worlds is a passable shoot-'em-up but fails to make any lasting impression because the control method is so bad. As well as using the joystick to move around the horizontally-scrolling area, you've got to rotate you're sprite to fire in different directions. This is difficult to accomplish, making *Worlds* an infuriating game to play.

However, the positive side presents a nifty two-player mode, a host of power-ups and interesting graphics. It's not going to be everyone's bag of bread, but it's certainly above average.

71%

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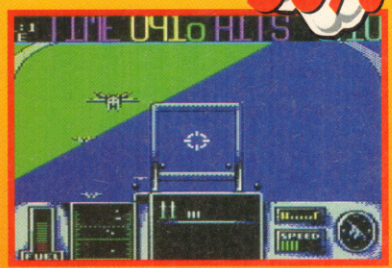
G-LOC
US Gold

It's a lot better than *Afterburner*, but *G-Loc* still has it's fair share of flaws. For a start, the graphics tend to be a little cluttered and it takes too long for your (supposedly hi-tech) plane to get a 'lock on' with an enemy. However, the main problem lies with the games tremendous lack of depth. In the arcades, the hydraulic cabinet and fantastic graphics captivated anyone who played it. Sadly, you can't duplicate these features on a C64, and so any original charm is lost.

56%



GALAXY FORCE
The Hit Squad

Excellent graphics and presentation make this ambitious space-age conversion good to look at — sadly they can't compensate for the lack of real gameplay. Surviving through the *Afterburner*esque gameplay seems to be an entirely random affair; inevitably, the rot sets in and you wander off to play something else. Sad, but true.

62%

GALIVAN
Imagine

This isn't exactly the apex in C64 shoot-'em-ups, but it's quite an enjoyable and challenging game that will give the buyer a couple of days entertainment. The graphics and sound are hardly inspiring, and having never seen the coin-op, I can't comment on how close they are. Don't expect wonders though...

53%

GAUNTLET
Kixx

What can be said about *Gauntlet* that hasn't been already? It was the perfect conversion to do, as the simplistic graphics and level designs wouldn't even tax a Spectrum. It's certainly not lightweight in terms of lastability though; with the *Deeper Dungeons* extra levels there are over 1000 multidirectional landscapes to explore and pillage. Get a friend to join in, and the action becomes far more enjoyable.

82%

GEMINI WING
Mastertronic Plus

Of course, you'll have all seen this on Issue 1's Reel Action, so there's no real reason to tell you about the compulsive, vertically-scrolling mayhem. You'll own a copy and will have enjoyed it to the full. Lucky old you!

80%

GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS
Kixx

One of the best arcade conversions ever, *Ghouls 'N' Ghosts* is a sheer delight to play. The Tim Follin soundtrack is superb, and the gameplay (although a trifle similar to it's predecessor) is pure, untarnished fun.

Getting through the various landscapes on the way to rescue a fair maiden is certainly tricky though; perhaps a too much so but there's definitely a lasting challenge. One you can come back to time and time again. Yahoo!

94%

GHOSTS AND GOBLINS
Encore

Curiously, both games in the superlative *Ghosts* saga are of the highest quality; but special merit has to go to this on account of it's age. As with it's sequel, the damsel-rescuing nature of the plot certainly won't win it many awards, but the gameplay is of a high enough calibre to justifiably do so. Killing assorted nasties in your underpants is great, so if you've ever wanted to do this without getting arrested — this is the game for you.

94%

GOLDEN AXE
Tronix

A great deal of people loved this, but personally I've never seen the attraction. Granted, the cosmetic side to the game is top-notch and there's certainly loads of levels, but theres not enough gameplay-wise for my liking. Using the same few combat moves over and over again leads to tedium — and I hate being bored.

Conclusion: Never let an Afghan hound borrow your Flymo (or something)

66%

GREAT GURIANOS
Encore

This competent conversion of the unremarkable beat-'em-up coin-op was originally licence by Elite, who were a trifle disappointed and didn't release it at full price. After appearing on a compilation, it eventually made it's way to the Encore budget label.

It's foremost feature is the size of the sprites; they're large and, although not particularly well animated, serve their purpose well enough. Sadly, it gets boring too quickly — although that's mainly due to the insipid original design.

53%

GREEN BERET
● Imagine

Green Beret's classic coin-op action is as enjoyable as you'd hope for; strangely, everything that the original had to offer is incorporated. Despite it's age, you'll be hard pushed to find better — I recommend you scour market stalls and car boot sales with a view to finding it's horizontally scrolling excellence.

88%

GRYZOR
● The Hit Squad

Gryzor is a multi-part shoot-'em-up that's remarkably close to the enjoyable coin-up. It's beginning to look a little dated these days, but with horizontally scrolling levels, single-screen blasting and lots more, there's still a lot to get your teeth into.

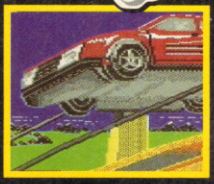
72%

GUERILLA WAR
● Imagine

Another dodgy conversion from the now defunct Imagine label. Sadly, there's little I can say about it, other than it's a multi-directional scrolling war-orientated blaster with absolutely nowt going for it.

19%

HARD DRIVIN'
● The Hit Squad



Errrmmm... I don't know what to say about this one. Not because I've got nothing to talk about — boy have I plenty — it's more a case of not knowing where to start!

The arcade original was a 3D driving simulation, offering two detailed tracks to race along. It was fast, novel and (arguably) exciting.

The C64 version has something that's supposed to be 3D. It's almost obscenely slow, uninteresting and phenomenally boring.

In fact, this game cries out 'I deserve 9%' to me.

9%

HYPER SPORTS
● The Hit Squad

It's getting on a bit now, but *Hyper Sports* is still the best waggling-orientated sporty-game around. OK, so it may kill your joystick with alarming speed, but it's still an enjoyable bash, requiring genuinely skilful timing.

76%

IKARI WARRIORS
● Encore

This development on the *Commando* theme is by far the best you'll find this side of the arcades. Fantastic gameplay is complemented by delicious graphics and although lastability may be a long-term problem with solo play, it's with it's two-player option that *Ikari Warriors* makes it's grade.

Storming along the vertically-scrolling area, shooting enemies and stealing tanks — this game has to be played to be believed...

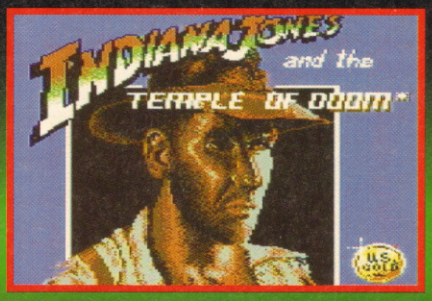
91%

INDY HEAT
● Storm

Following the success of *Super Off-Road Racer*, it was inevitable that there'd be a sequel. Without a doubt, *Indy Heat* is the best overhead racing game available on the C64, offering frantic racing action, a two-player option and a real need for strategy. Rather than just tearing around the tracks (as you would in, say, *Supersprint*) you need to make pit-stops, the efficiency of these being directly influenced by the skill of your pit crew. These, of course, can be improved with winnings and careful purchases, but don't forget to improve the car.

This is the sort of game that'll make you forget to feed the cat for a few days. Buy it.

88%



INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM
● Kixx

MILES: Hello James — what's that you're playing.

JAMES: Whimper!

MILES: A poorly constructed mis-mash of three uninspiring sub-games, converted from an insipid coin-op?

JAMES: Whimper!

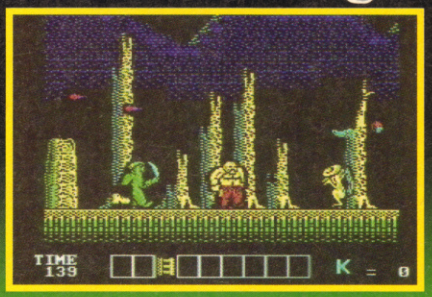
MILES: I can remember playing it before now. It's a sure-fire 40%er if ever I've seen one (and no mistake, cor blimey guv'ner).

40%

JAIL BREAK
● Konami

Why bother making a C64 version of an insipid arcade machine? *Jail Break* was a singularly unremarkable coin-op; as a '64 game it's astonishingly worse. All I can say is tie me to a raft then float me in the direction of hungry sharks — but please, don't make me play it again...

19%



KARNOV
● Electric Dreams

I've no doubt many of you are aware of how *Dizzy* games are often accused of being direct Spectrum ports. *Karnov* seems to be yet another one; also like them it's tremendously slow and unplayable. It's a shame really; so much could have been made of it...

47%

KLAX
The Hit Squad

After *Tetris*, the amount of puzzle games rearing their (occasionally ugly) heads just had to be seen to be believed. *Klax* is one of the better ones, and essentially it involves manipulating blocks and arranging them in certain patterns as they drop. It's very simplistic, and good fun for a while but if (like me) you're not a massive puzzle enthusiast, then don't hesitate before knocking a good 30% off the overall percentage I've given.

80%

KUNG-FU MASTER
US Gold

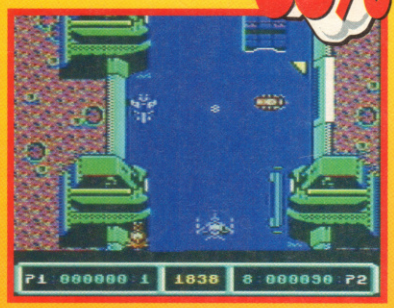
The arcade machine has spawned many a derivative clone; this is particularly puzzling when you think how dire it was! Nevertheless, US Gold converted the basic beat-'em-up action well, but the original's design makes for soon tedious action.

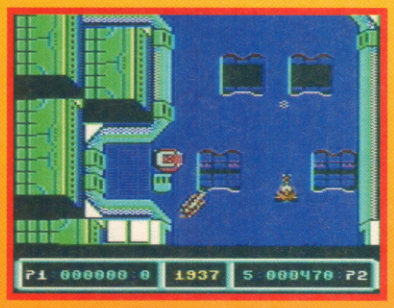
56%

LAST DUEL
US Gold

Like *LED Storm* (reviewed elsewhere on these pages), *Last Duel* is a conversion of an insipid coin-op involving car-like vehicles and a host of things to avoid and shoot. However, unlike the aforementioned, it's egg-smashingly mediocre. Feeble graphics and sound do little to add buoyancy to gameplay that should be sunk — if I bought this myself I think I'd have to sit in a corner for a few hours and whimper. Lots.

33%





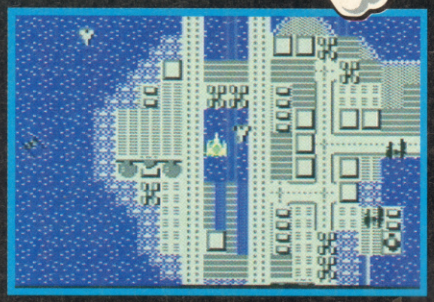
LAST MISSION
US Gold

Harry had never really been pleased with the cheese and ham toastie he'd bought. When he'd left it on the side, he expected it to behave as snacks usually do; ie not move. He returned later to find it putting the finishing touches to what 'it' described as a 'flipping great computer game, man'.

Actually, this was a bit of a fib, as the multidirectional scrolling shoot-'em-up action was not of the finest quality. The graphics were pretty dodgy too — obviously, the ham content dimmed his creative talents.

Harry did what any person would do when confronted by a C64 programming sandwich. He fed it to the dog.

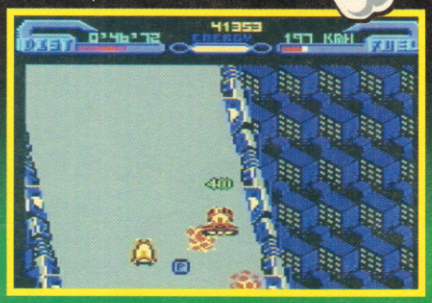
32%

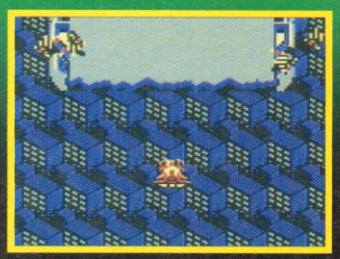


LED STORM
Kixx

LED Storm has a fantastic soundtrack, detailed graphics and excellent presentation. It's a vertically-scrolling racer where, as opposed to shooting things, you make your car jump on their heads. It's certainly unusual, but the only fault lies in the arcade originals insipid design. That's not to say it's totally unplayable —there's at least a week or so of enjoyment in it — but sadly the conversion is a top-notch replica of a none-too-hot coin-op.

72%

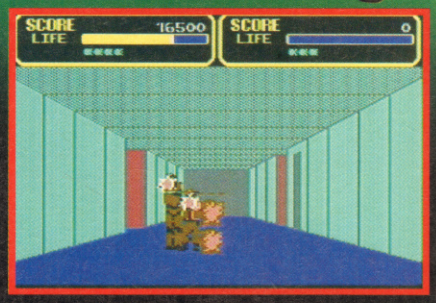




LEGEND OF KAGE
Imagine

It's old and more than a little crude-looking but *Legend of Kage* is great fun… for about half an hour. It's old, limited, derivative — and you won't be able to buy it these days. Lucky old you.

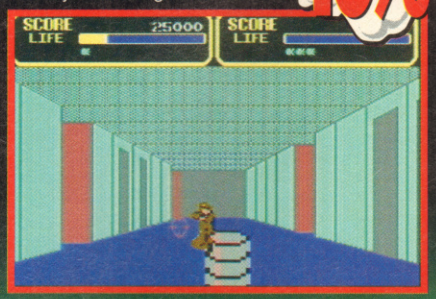
34%



LINE OF FIRE
US Gold

Into-the-screen shoot-'em-ups in the shooting-gallery style aren't really the sort of games the C64 excels at. When you consider that the arcade machine's foremost novelty (and quality) is the cabinet-mounted guns used to pick off targets, it makes using a joystick a bit of a joke. Personally, I think it's a vastly over-rated genre, and *Line of Fire* is a shockingly bad effort. Shooting poorly-defined sprites while uninteresting backgrounds scroll towards and past you isn't my idea of a good time.

40%



All good things must come to an end of sorts, and it's with moistened eyes that I wave goodbye to this first instalment of (possibly) the biggest C64 round-up ever. Next month — the m's to the z's. You'll be a double aardvark milkshake (?!) to miss it, you know...

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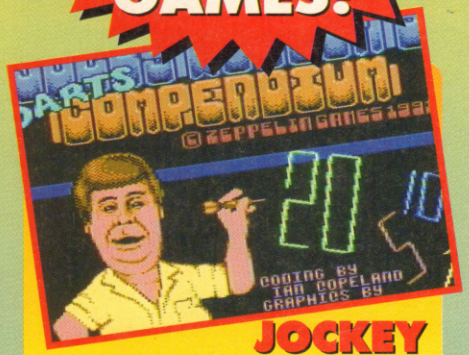
What kind of a person are you? According to several, stereotyped reports you're either a lazy couch potato, or an energy-thriving adrenalin-junkie. Apart from being most inaccurate, it does little to a potato's already-sheltered lifestyle. Imagine the scene; a small root vegetable, who works hard for a living, participates in a local 'It's A Knockout' tournament. A few weeks later it discovers that humans have used its active lifestyle to describe a slovenly human! It's enough to make a potato commit suicide via saucepans and forks — now there's food for thought!

So to avoid being named at the expense of a potato, the right-on thing to do is take up a sport, and what easier way than to play Zeppelin's excellent *Sports* compilation. With five games included it's definitely money-worthy, and what better way to unwind than lying on the couch with a bag of potato crisps playing darts.

In conjunction with the release (see review elsewhere this ish) Zeppelin have come up with the splendid idea of giving one fortuitous reader a brand new copy of *Sports* PLUS the entire Zeppelin back catalogue. That's over fifty games! Ten equally lucky entrants plucked from the bag will each get the *Sports* collection and a free potato! Okay, the potato isn't included (due to transportation and mold problems) but who needs those sad, suicidal vegetables anyway?

So, what do you need to perform to stand a chance of winning? As with all things easy, this couldn't be simpler, just answer the following question:

INTERNATIONAL FIVE-A SIDE



JOCKEY WILSON'S DARTS

FANTASTIC SOCCER

AMERICAN 3D POOL

Where are the 1996 Olympic Games being held?

A) Spud U Like

B) Atlanta

C) Isle Of Sheppey

■ Send in your answers on a postcard or (if your too mean to buy any) the back of a sealed down envelope to:

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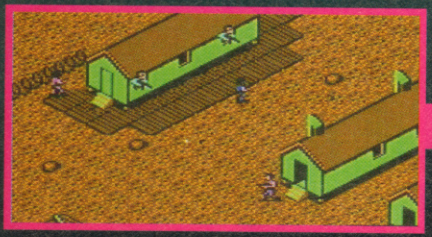
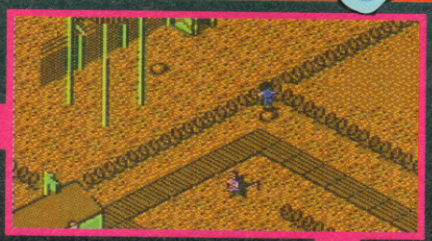
THE TIPSTER!

This month, I've been under the impression that I was a 1970's disc jockey entertaining a wedding reception at a local village hall. There I was, spinning two paper plates on my desk and asking the stationary cupboard for requests. 'Lets have everybody on the dance floor' I hollered — 'come on Grandad, even you'. It was a nightmare and nothing but! Just when I thought I'd recovered from this un-nerving ordeal I awoke to find myself carving medallions out my sandwich box. What inexplicable force could have brought this on? At first I thought Bernard Cribbens was involved in some way, but then I realised — with so many tips to compile I'm suffering a nervous breakdown! Gees, talk about a weight off your shoulders.





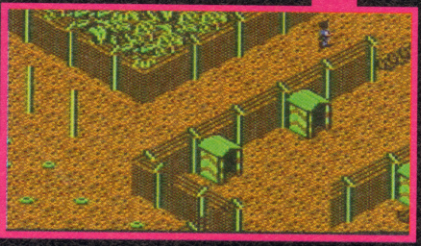
ARNIE 2

• Zeppelin

This sequel is a major let-down — a shame considering the addictive blasting of the first game.

Trudging through the first level can result in a lot of life loss, so why bother? Wouldn't it be much easier to go right into level two with no deaths? Well thanks to a graphical error (mistake or intentional, you decide) Arnie can stride into level two.

From the start, walk past the buildings (avoiding the gun fire) and you'll come to some lengths of barbed wire. Move to where the two lengths intertwine and position Arnie as close as possible. Waggle the joystick and Arn will sneakily step through, into the end of the section where no baddies appear! Walk up, through the mine field, and diagonally right to reach the exit. Level Two awaits!

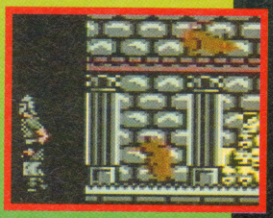


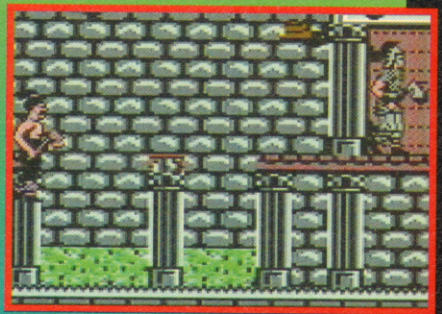
ARTURA

• Prism

This isn't really a cheat, more of a freakish treat for the eyes. Press down shift lock and keep hold of diagonal down on the joystick (left or right). All of the baddies will stop but your man can still walk around. Walk off the screen this way and instead of going to the next screen the score and energy will scramble. Now let go of the controls to end up on a completely different screen than expected.

Thanks to **Craig Wolley** for that strange bit of info





McDONALDLA

Virgin

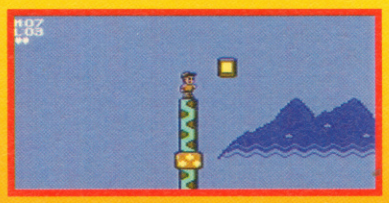
And here is the winner from last issues *Master Blaster* section. For those interested, *Nobby The Aardvark* came a close second followed by *Shadow Dancer*. Finally, *Darkman* crawled over the finish line with only a handful of votes! *McDonaldland* is hardly taxing but there's plenty of secret lives to be found. So if it's proving a tad gristly on the teeth, pick out the bits with this guide to the first area — Ronald's House.

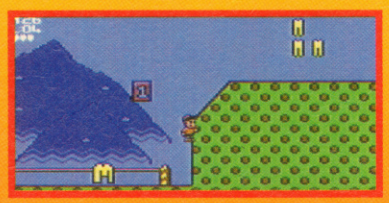
TOWERING TREES

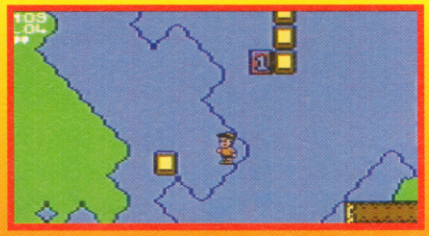
■ There are two cards to collect in this level and both can be found near the beginning with a bit of tree climbing. Later on, a series of springs and dozens of coins appear. Nab them all, as points make… er, extra lives.

THE GARDEN

■ Toward the end is a tall mast with a single yellow block at the very top. Stand on the block and leap as far right as possible. You'll miss the finishing tape and be able to collect several hidden coins and a extra life.





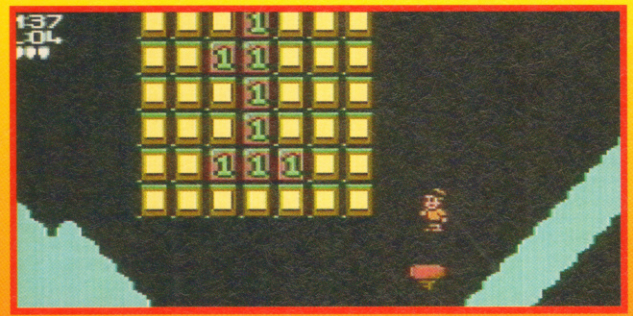


GOPHER GROVE

■ There's an extra life at the very start — top left, just past the spider.

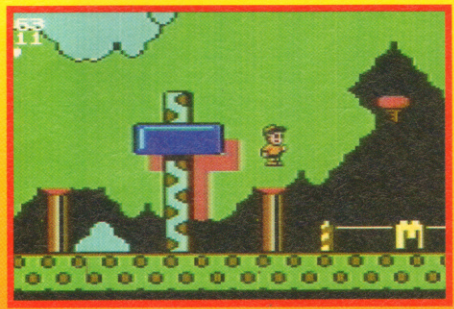
There's only one spring in this level so use it — it leads straight to the 'M' card.

Don't hastily jump to the right. There's only one safe way across, and that's a boat at the bottom of the screen.



LAZY LEAVES

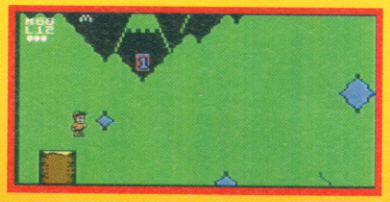
■ Instead of snapping the finishing tape, jump over it to find a handy spring. Use it to be flung up to 8 extra lives ripe for the picking.

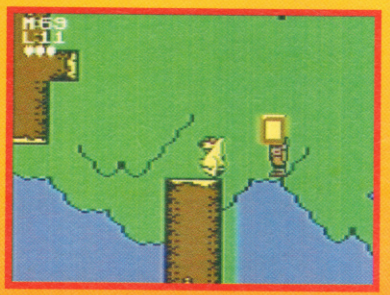


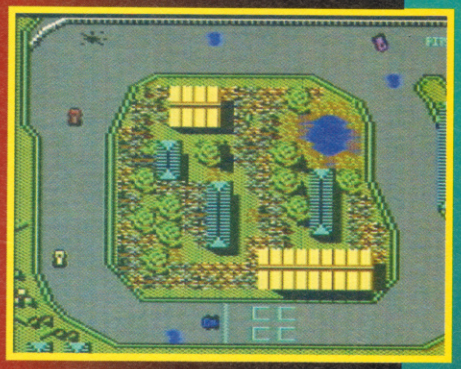
LAND

HIDDEN GLEN

■ There's an extra life at the very start. Collect a block and throw it at the bear above. From this platform jump far left and you should just reach another branch. Superjump to claim the floating life card.





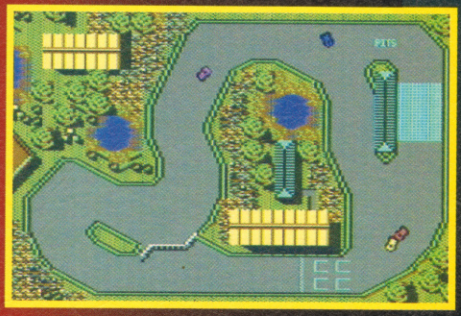


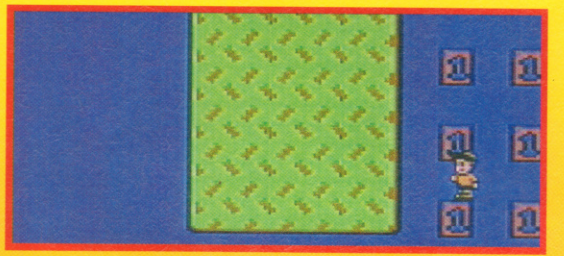
CARNAGE

● **Zeppelin**

Carnage adds a big twist of lemon to all *Supersprint*-style race games. It's one of the best around and well deserved the plump 81% that it was awarded just a few months ago.

It's quite odd, but when competing in a two player game the yellow car is always able to overtake the others by driving through them! It can also stop in the road and block all other cars. To use this to your advantage, select a two player game and position the yellow car where it'll block off the computer drivers. Then, drive the pink one around to win the race every time (be sure to avoid the road blockage though, the pink car will become stuck too!)

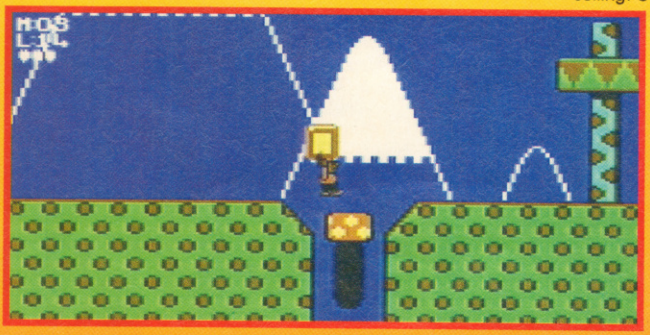




MOUNTAIN VIEW

■ From the start jump on the near platforms to reach the very top of the screen. Walk right until you see the inverting wheel. Instead of turning upside down jump up as high as possible to end up on top of the ceiling! Continue right, and with careful timing you can reach the end of the level (still on the ceiling) and be able to drop down to collect 8 extra lives.

When you encounter any spring board platforms, grab a block and jump on. The extra weight will spring you a lot higher to reach unseen platforms.



TIPS CLINIC SPECIAL

So many of you write in with a specific game problem and as much as I'd like to I just don't have the time to send back answers. So this issue, the clinic has been expanded to cover tips for three of the most requested games.

TIP OF THE MONTH! CART WINNER!

This months prize for the best tips goes to... dum dum dumm... ME! Because I've done just about everything. Nah, only joking. The action replay will soon be joining **David Clarkson** from **Hull for summer picnics thanks to his (readable)** *Dizzy* solution. Make it feel at home David — a cart's for life, not just a freebie.

FIVE ON TREASURE ISLAND

Enigma Variations

A full solution to this diddly puzzler has been hotly sought by several eager readers. A couple of hints were printed a few issues back but it obviously wasn't enough so here's the answer thanks to **Darryl Marshal**.

From the start: Wait, wait, wait, wait, leave train, e, e, e, buy bear, give Anne bear, w, ne, n, w, sw, nw, n, get rope. S, se, ne, w, u, s, examine clock, get batteries. N, w, s, examine bed, get matches, give Anne rope, give Dick batteries, n, e, u, open trunk, get candles, d, d, w, light candle, n, say Dick get torch. S. Search until you find George, go to shop, buy ices. Head back to George and give her the ices. Go to hall A, say George n, s, turn on wireless, become George. W, se, get all, nw, become Julian. Say Dick insert batteries into torch. Turn on wireless, become George, w, open door, w, get spade, e, e, s, s, become Julian. Turn on wireless, say Joanna, give Dick gloves, n, e, e, ne, e, become George, enter boat, give Julian spade, get oars, row, row, row, row, row, row, drop oars, leave boat, pull boat, become Julian. Give Anne money, se, ne, examine Heather, say Anne tie rope to stump, say Anne drop rope down hole. D, strike grate, get axe, u, sw, n, ne, become George, eat cake, become Dick. Unwrap sandwiches, eat sandwiches, get paper, get sticks, sw, e, e, drop sticks, give Julian paper, become Julian. Light paper, light sticks with paper, drop paper, w, w, s, nw, n, ne, enter ship, d, w, examine seaweed, chop cupboard, say Dick get box, e, u, leave ship, sw, s, push boat, become George, enter boat, get oars, row, row, row, row, row, row, drop oars, leave boat, pull boat, w, sw, w, w, u, u, become Dick, open window, throw box out of window, d, d, e, sw, nw, open window, quietly e, open drawer, get box, open box, get map, read map, drop box, drop map, open window, quietly w, close window, se, ne, e, ne, e, become George, push boat, enter boat, get oars, row, row, row, row, row, row, drop oars, leave boat, pull boat, se, ne, get rope, untie rope, sw, n, say Dick give me gloves, wear gloves, pull bush, give Dick rope, drop gloves, d, u, e, say Julian dig, say Timmy dig, Become Dick, give Anne torch, tie rope to ring, pull rope, untie rope, become Julian, say Anne turn on torch, d, d, w, nw, nw, s, examine column, push grill, n, sw, sw, say Dick s. Chop door, chop door, chop door, s, n, chop door, become Dick, s, se, n, d, say Anne give torch, d, the rope ladder, drop rope, d, become Julian, light match, chop door, n, get lantern, get ingot, become Anne, wait, wait, wait, u, wander around until you get captured. Become Dick, wait, wait, wait, wait, w, n, sw, sw, examine matting, get key, unlock doors, now keep trying, wait until Timmy growls. Wait, n, lock door, ne, ne, se, se, e, u, u, w, s, nw, become George, push boat, enter boat, get oars, row, row, row, row, row, row, drop oars, leave boat, pull boat, become Julian, w, sw, w, sw, nw. If uncle Quentin isn't here find him. If he is give him Ingot. Become George, keep waiting until police arrive, go back to boat, push boat, enter boat, get oars, row, row, row, row, row, row, drop oars, leave boat, pull boat, se, n, e, d, d, w, nw, nw, sw, sw, become Dick, unlock door to complete the game. Cheer, cheer and thrice cheer.

FANTASY WORLD DIZZY

CodeMasters

It had to happen. No matter how many times they're printed, solutions for *Dizzy* games are wanted more than anything else. So to silence a lot of whinging and moaning, here's the answer to the top egg adventure that's puzzling you most.

Drop the apple next to the troll. Get bread, get the jug of water and drop it next to the fire. Head left, jump the gap, get the boulder then up-right. Drop the bread in the middle of the passage and wait for the rat to eat it. Jump through the hole in the roof, drop the boulder and walk right. Jump on the crocodile and off again quickly. Collect the boulder walk left, drop the boulder and go up-left. Hit the switch, go up, right, jump up and left, jump up and right, up, up, pick up bone, down, right, get key, left, down, left, down, right, drop key, get boulder, left, left, drop the bone at cave entrance, get boulder, wait for Armarog to go under cave, left, left, drop both boulders in water, right, right, right, right, get boulder, left, left, left, left, drop boulder in water, left, left, left, get sleeping potion from Dozy, right, right, right, get key, right, right, right, right, right, right, drop potion next to dragon, left, left, get key, right, right, right, get bag (to carry more objects), up-right, right, down-left, put keys in lift control, right, up, left, left, get in lift, get crowbar from grand Dizzy, left, collect pick axe, right, get in lift, right, right, down, right, get cow, left, up-left, left, drop crowbar on hatch, fall down to weird city. Walk left, give cow to shop keeper, collect bean, right, right, get key, left, down, go up. Next, go right, right, down-left, put key in lift control, right, right, plant bean in cow pat, left, up, left, left, get in lift, right, up, right, get knocker, left, down, left, get in lift, fall down-left, left, left, up-left, up, right, jump up-left, jump up-right, up, drop knocker by door to open it, left, get bucket, right, down, left, down, right, right, right, right, up-right, right, right, right, right, fill bucket in pool by walking into it. Then head left, left, drop bucket on cow pat, climb beanstalk, right, up, right, right, right, drop rug next to spikes, jump up-left, jump up-right, hit switch, left, right, talk to Daisy to complete the game! Well, nearly… you need to collect 30 coins that are hidden around the landscape (some of which are behind the railings).

Points to remember:

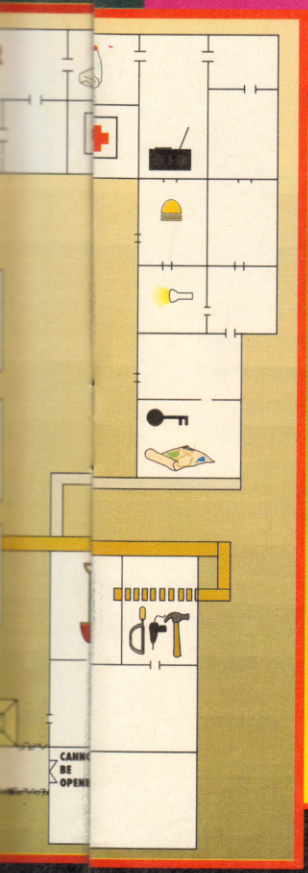
Talk to Denzil to get the rope. You can then drop it on the alligator to stop it biting.

Take all 30 coins to Daisy's cottage.

Try to get the coin that sits under the table before you flick the switch to rescue Daisy.

To finish off this extra big section **A Orwin** from **Sheffield** has decided to lend a helping hand to **S M O'Brien** who, back in issue 4, aired his problem concerning *Wizard Willy*. Personally, I've never even heard of the game but it's good to see fellow Commy comrades coming together in times of need.

To defeat the end of level guardian position Willy on the top platform in front of the skull. As the top of the skull comes up to the platform level fire a three shot volley and jump the approaching fire bolts. Repeat this to destroy the beast. Sounds simple enough Mr O'Brien, so try and apply.



THE GREAT ESCAPE

The Hit Squad

Steve McQueen had enough problems but it's really surprising to hear from so many of you who are stuck on escaping, as this little number's getting really old. Maybe it's the classic addiction that has had many of you hunting down a copy — whatever the reason, a good many people have written in. To ease life as a convict and finally flee from the encampment, follow this convincing convict routine.

Get KEY ONE, open the relevant door and get the GUARD'S UNIFORM. Wear the uniform on your way out and leave the key where you found it. Get the RED CROSS PARCEL, open it and pick up the MONEY BAG. Put this in the tunnel. Collect KEY TWO and use it to open the relevant door. Put the key in a safe place and collect the TOOL KIT before unlocking the door to the room with the SPADE. Take the TOOL KIT to the tunnel, get the SPADE and do the same. Leave the UNIFORM here as well. Get the TOOL KIT followed by the ID PAPERS. Leave the TOOL KIT and collect the TORCH. Head back to the tunnel and remove the blockage using the SPADE. Put this down and go back for the ID PAPERS. Use the tunnel again, only this time leave the ID PAPERS at the end of the tunnel near the exercise yard. Follow the normal routine in Day Two but get the RED CROSS PARCEL — it contains the WIRE-CUTTERS which are essential for your escape.

Follow the normal routine of Day Three but collect the RED CROSS PARCEL. On Day Four collect the RED CROSS PARCEL for the COMPASS. You now have all of the escape equipment. Use the main tunnel and take the COMPASS to the exercise yard. Use the WIRE-CUTTERS on the wire. Drop the COMPASS, cut the wire and collect the ID PAPERS, then cut the wire again to get out. Drop the WIRE-CUTTERS, pick up the COMPASS and sprint off-screen to freedom.

THE LIST GOES ON...

And now for something completely… similar to issue two and three's multihack listing. These additional lines floated in thanks to an anonymous reader and **Darren Mason**. Just type in issue two's master program, SAVE it and add the following data for the required game.

ACTION BIKER
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 047, 141, 087, 075, 096, -1

AMERICAN 3D POOL
(Infinite balls)
20 DATA 169, 000, 141, 099, 058, 096, -1

CHILLER
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 173, 089, 096, -1

EXCALIBA
(Infinite lives/time)
20 DATA 169, 165, 141, 246, 103, 169, 096, 111
21 DATA 052, 104, 096, -1

GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR 2
(Qualify every time)
20 DATA 169, 032, 141, 013, 059, 169, 085, 141
21 DATA 141, 059, 169, 002, 141, 015, 059, 096
22 DATA 224, 000, 208, 003, 254, 189, 051, 096, -1

GUARDIAN ANGEL
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 170, 024, 096, -1

HOLLYWOOD OR BUST
(End sequence)
20 DATA 189, 006, 141, 177, 046, 096, -1

KAMIKAZE
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 139, 028, 141, 128, 035
21 DATA 096, -1

KGB SUPERSPY
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 139, 028, 141, 128, 039
21 DATA 096, -1

LITTLEPUFF
(No collision)
20 DATA 169, 169, 141, 147, 155, 141, 163, 156
21 DATA 141, 169, 157, 169, 000, 141, 148, 155
22 DATA 141, 164, 156, 141, 170, 157, 169, 234
23 DATA 141, 149, 159, 141, 165, 196, 141, 171
24 DATA 157, 096, -1

MIAMI CHASE
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 076, 141, 097, 134, 169, 142, 141
21 DATA 098, 134, 169, 186, 141, 099, 134, 096, -1

POD
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 252, 102, 096, -1

PHILEAS FOGG'S BALLOON BATTLES
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 200, 081, 096, -1

RED MAX
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 208, 204, 096, -1

SKYJET
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 250, 141, 144, 108, 096 -1

SOS
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 007, 021, 096, -1

SPELLBOUND
(Infinite energy)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 001, 024, 096, -1

SPEEDKING
(No collision)
20 DATA 169, 234, 141, 023, 140, 141, 024, 140
21 DATA 141, 025, 140, 096, -1

STARFORCE NOVA
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 240, 141, 021, 023, 096, -1

STREET SURFER
(Invincibility)
20 DATA 169, 230, 141, 028, 015, 169, 067, 141
21 DATA 029, 015, 169, 169, 141, 030, 015, 096, -1

SUPER PIPELINE 2
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 082, 129, 096, -1

VAMPIRE
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 032, 033, 141, 249, 040
21 DATA 096, -1

VIDEO POKER
(Infinite lives)
20 DATA 169, 000, 141, 041, 016, 096, -1

VOIDRUNNER
(Infinite lives and level choice)
20 DATA 169, 173, 141, 109, 049, 169, 031, 141
21 DATA 159, 056, 096, -1

MASTERBLASTER MAYHEM! TIPS LINE

ROBIN HOOD -LEGEND QUEST

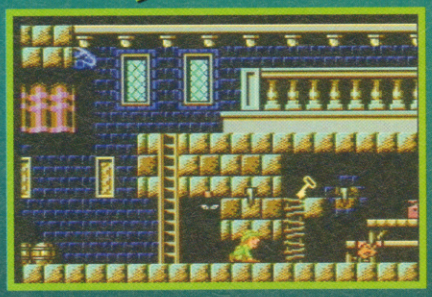
The telephones were hot with many calls from issue fives tips phone line and here is the winner! Unfortunately, due to tight deadlines we went to press just before this could be included, so here are some subtle hints.

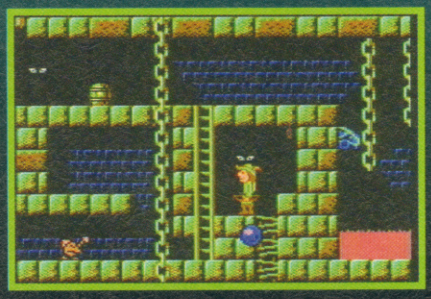
From the start collect the key and go onto the top platform to the right. Jump off this to create a small passage at the bottom of the screen through to the second key. Slide through the gap on your knees watching out for gargoyle fire.

On the level below there are two chains hanging over a lava pit. Hang on the bottom left chain to be impervious to the falling boulders later on.

Further on, there are three fire spewing gargoyles. Hang on to the bottom of the left chain and a secret passage will open at the end of the corridor.

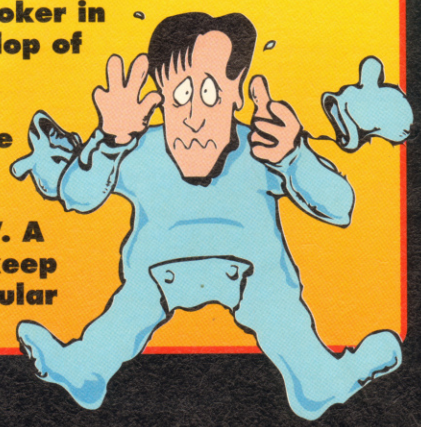
Our review copy was a bit dodgy so I was unable to test this out but, apparently, to start with four lives instead of three hold left just before you start.





Another cheat that has eluded me but has been assured to work is a level skip mode. To gain access to level two activate the closest gargoyle to the start and this should open a new route from where you first began. Try it, you might like it!

I like this part of the tips section. With it all wrapped up and ready for press I can just sit back, relax and let the waters of tranquillity wash over my toes. But then, just when the air is settled, a big explosion occurs and flings me off into an abyss of letters. So with a wave of the hand, a poker in the eye and a big greasy dollop of Brylcreem — I shall depart. For those who want to take note, my twisted being can be contacted at: The Tipster, COMMODORE FORCE, Impact Magazines, Ludlow, SY8 1JW. A final word — if you want to keep fit and healthy, get some regular exercise. Just a thought...



THAT'S NEAT, THAT'S NEAT, THAT'S NEAT I REALLY LOVE YOUR TIGER... BOOKS!

THE BOOK OF THE DRAGON

Ciruelo's masterpiece — an ideal gift for the mother-in-law?

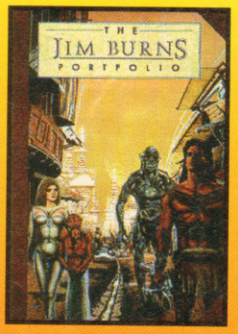
Paper Tiger

WIN! OVER £175 WORTH OF PAPER TIGER BOOKS... PLUS BADGES, BOOKMARKS AND POSTERS!

All four volumes are available at £10.95 from Paper Tiger.

THE RODNEY MATTHEWS PORTFOLIO

Distinctly weird, but definitely intriguing — this guy's a nutter!

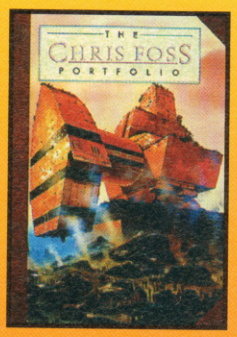


THE JIM BURNS PORTFOLIO

Jim's been burning the midnight oil to compile this ace fantasy collection!

THE CHRIS FOSS PORTFOLIO

One of Sci-Fi's most enduring talents: no foss, no nonsense!



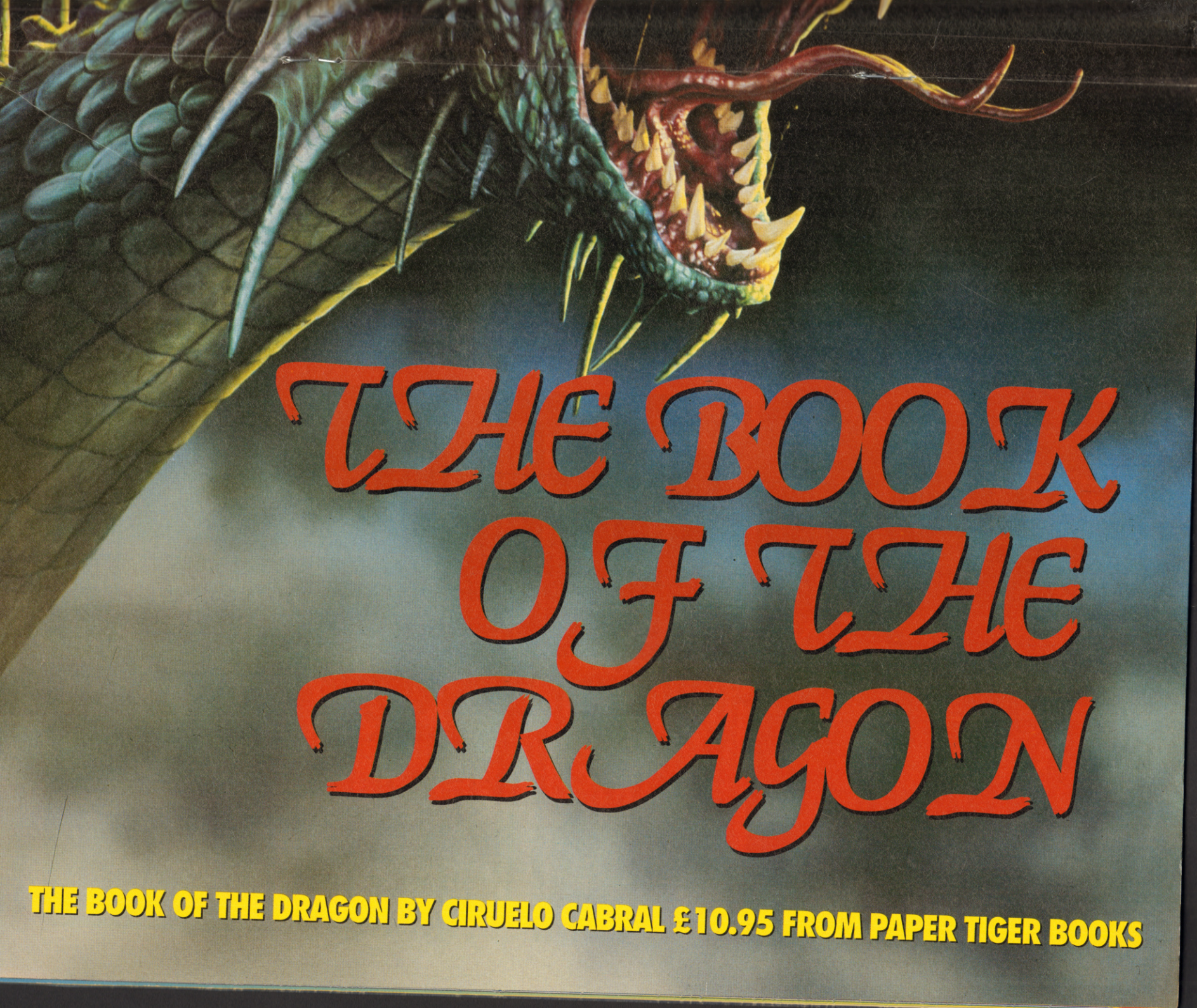
With our resident art-master Oli Frey away on his hol's, we were at a loss as to what to use for a poster. Then we discovered that Paper Tiger Books had an astonishing new volume all ready to hit the shelves, and our worries were over — the front cover of Ciruelo Cabral's *The Book Of The Dragon* would, we thought, make an excellent pull-out.

Not satisfied with the poster, though, Paper Tiger insisted that we give FOUR lucky winners the chance of seeing the book for themselves, plus three of their other best-selling titles. TEN runners up will each receive Paper Tiger bookmarks, badges and posters!

So what do you have to do to be able to feast your eyes on Mr Cabral's dazzling designs? Simple — just draw us a dragon! The four best pics we receive will be printed in the mag so please use colour where possible and, if the response is overwhelming, we may consider publishing our *own* book of the dragon!

Send your entries to: Doesn't It Drag On! Competition, COMMODORE FORCE, Impact Magazines (UK) Ltd., Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1JW. We're sorry, but only entrants who enclose a SAE will stand any chance of seeing their art-work again. The closing date is June 27, so any entries received later than that will go up in smoke...

COMMODORE FORCE AND Paper Tiger PRESENT


THE BOOK OF THE DRAGON
THE BOOK OF THE DRAGON BY CIRUELO CABRAL £10.95 FROM PAPER TIGER BOOKS

THE MIGHTY BRAIN

As the days grow warmer the skies fill with thunder. And with all my electrical appliances, the last thing I need is for a bolt of lightning to short my computer and loose this months crop of letters. But hey, it's all backed up on my cerebral cortex — talk about extra memory!

MODEM-TASTIC COMPUTER KIDS!

Dear Professor,
I purchased *Mini Office 2* and it has two Electronic Mail Packages on the tape. One says 'User Port Communications' and the other says 'Compunet'. What would I need to use them? I have tried 'Compunet' to receive a message, but all I get is a load of garbage.
Gareth Jones, Swansea, Wales.

● *So you want to enter the world of comms (short for communications)? You will need 3 items:*
1) A user port mode. AW Software of Lincoln can supply one at: 104, Hollywell Rd, Lincoln, LN5 9BY0 — write and ask for a catalogue (and mention my name!)
2) A telephone line
3) A very deep pocket/wallet/bank account to pay for the increased phone bills.
I must also point out that Compunet no longer exists.
Brian

STARRY, STARRY NIGHT

Dear Prof,
I have a Star LC200 and Centronics cable from Datel. I have set it up as the manual says.
1) How do I use it with *Saracen Paint* and *Fun School Paint And Create*? I have tried to print but it says 'error in printer'.
2) How do I print out in colour from my Action Replay cartridge?
3) Should I buy a Power Cartridge as I have heard it is good for printing?
G Smith, Macclesfield, Cheshire.

● *1) Saracen Paint doesn't have a print option, but Fun School Paint And Create is designed to work with a serial printer, not a Centronics printer.*
2) Datel's Technical Helpline says 'The Action Replay was designed before colour printers like the Star LC200 were readily available, and so will only print out in 16 shades of grey. We recommend you buy the colour printer driver as advertised with the Star LC200 package.'
3) You will not need a power cartridge as it can only print in shades of grey.
Brian

TWISTING, TURNING, NON-TALKING HEADS

Dear Professor,
The Turbo Datacorder advert says 'Worry no more, kiss those no-load tape blues goodbye'. Well, what we need to know is do they tend to wander out of alignment like the standard datasette? Could you recommend an easy to use tape head alignment kit?
Lee and Diane, Bexley Heath, Kent

1) Tr
mem
2) If
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appe
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Bria

SERIAL OR CEREAL?

Dear Prof,
I got a 64 and a datasette for Christmas. If I get a printer and a disk drive, can I plug them both in at the same time? Each use the serial port and my computer only has one.
A Thornton, Luton, Bedfordshire.

● *Please stay clam, the exits are at the back... no, stay here, don't go! What I meant to say was that every Commodore disk drive has two serial ports on the back. You connect one to the computer and the other to the printer, and Bob's your auntie's brother (your father?). You can even have more than one disk drive if you want.*
Brian

HOPSON'S POKES

Dear PBS,
Here's a list of protection POKEs for you.
POKE 775,200 disable list
POKE 775,237 enable list
POKE 774,226 resets computer if list is typed
POKE 808,239 disable run/stop
POKE 808,237 enable run/stop
POKE 808,223 disable run/stop & restore
POKE 808,237 enable run/stop
POKE 808,223 disable run/stop and restore
POKE 808,237 enable run/stop and restore
POKE 816,32 disable LOAD
POKE 816,165 enable LOAD
POKE 818,32 disable SAVE
POKE 818,237 enable SAVE
POKE 649,0 disable keyboard
POKE 649,10 enable keyboard
1) Is there a way you can enter pokes like changing the border colour by an Action Replay cart?
2) Is there any chance of a feature on programming in machine code?
A Hopson, Salisbury, Wilts

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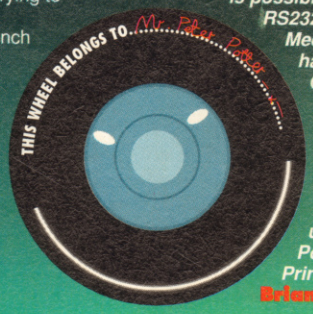
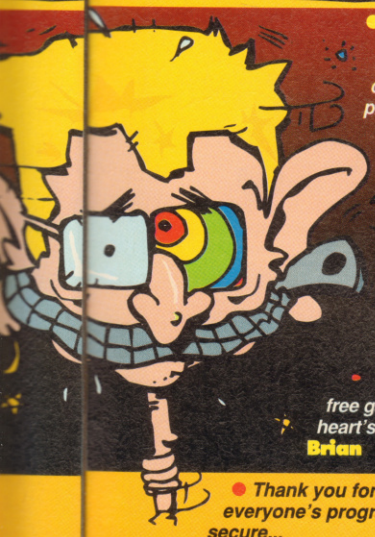
GHTY IAN!

INTERLUDE — THE POTTER'S WHEEL!

Dear Professor,
1) I've had many sleepless nights trying to find a solution to my problem. I'm not a very good programmer and am trying to write a French translator program, to translate French words into English. How can I get it to add a word to the dictionary and save it?
2) Is it possible to use a Hewlett Packard Deskjet 500+ with the Commodore 64? If so what do I need, how much will it cost and where could I get it from?
Jon Potter, Aylesbury, Bucks



● *1) An alternative to writing your own program is to use a database. Each 'record' has 2 'fields' — French and English. You can search the records to find a particular word in French and the record(s) containing it will appear giving you the English. You can also translate the other way!*
2) Connecting a Hewlett Packard Deskjet is possible. You will need an RS232 interface from Meedmore whose address has appeared in COMMODORE FORCE before. It will cost about £70 and any software you want to use it with must be able to print to device 2 (also known as the user Port/Parallel/Centronics Printer).
Brian



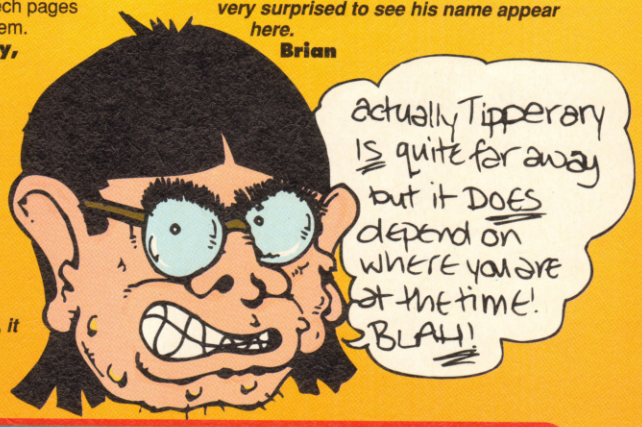
● *The Turbo Datacorder is a high-quality, specially designed tape player that reduces the amount of problems that the standard datasette has. As for recommending a head alignment kit, the Trading Post (see advertisement elsewhere) do such a kit for a tenner, complete with a free game to load to your heart's content!*
Brian

● *Thank you for the POKEs, I hope everyone's programs are now secure...*
1) Try using the POKEs option or modifying memory using the machine code monitor.
2) If demand is great enough, I will ask the editor about doing such a feature. Meanwhile, machine code routines will appear in reply to reader's questions when necessary.
Brian

IT'S A SHORT WAY TO TIPPERARY...

Dear Lloyd, (**Are you sure about this? — Brian!**)
1) I recently bought an Action Replay VI cartridge. Why does it crash every time I use a poke, and do I have to enter one poke at a time and restart the game after each?
2) Can I list games with the cartridge?
3) What is the cheapest disk drive and how much is it?
5) Is there a Public Domain contact point in Ireland?
Keep up the good work as your tech pages are brill. I have learned a lot from them.
Phillip Doheny, Co Tipperary, Ireland.

● *Lloyd was very busy the other day so he passed this letter on to me (between you and me I don't think he could answer all your questions).*
1) Erm, this is very strange. I suggest pressing the cartridge button on the title screen and entering all the pokes, then restarting with F3. With all the modern tricks like raster splitting, it is very difficult for a cartridge to safely, and completely, freeze a program.
2) Games are written in machine code which cannot be listed like a Basic program. You must use the machine code monitor on the Action Replay cart to disassemble the code into mnemonics (which are easier to understand than plain numbers, which is all machine code is). Remember it is illegal to copy from or alter games using a cartridge.
3) The best one to go for is the 1541-II at about £130 which takes 5.25" disks. You may be able to find one second hand.
5) Write to XEER of the demo group OZONE at 23 Linden Avenue, Beaumont, Cork, Ireland. He's a loyal reader of my column and will be very surprised to see his name appear here.
Brian



If you think I'm just a tech-head who knows nothing about playing games, let me just say that I have scored over one million points on Insects in Space (even the great ex-ZZAPper Robin Hogg couldn't manage more than 300,000!)

Write to me, the one and only at:

PROF. BRIAN STRAIN,
COMMODORE FORCE,
Impact Magazines,
Ludlow
Shropshire
SY8 1JW

Whatever the problem you're having with your Commodore 64, hardware, software, or your own programs, I can help. And if you include a SAE, you'll get a personal reply, direct from me! (poetry again!) BYE!

THE MIGHTY BRIAN!

Back again? I don't know, another month, another monstrous sack of mail to wade through. You just thank your lucky stars I'm here to help and advise. Remember — a problem shared is a problem doubled.

Anyway, as Issue Five's reader surveys have started flooding in, I've noticed an unforgivable omission — nowhere have I been included! So come on readers, let's have some support for an old letter-page compiler. I'm still here you know...

MANGRAM'S MAIL BAG

ARE BOYS ELECTRIC?

Dear Lloyd,
Having just re-entered the '64 scene, I thought I'd write in and make a few observations. Firstly, I would like to point out that I've been a C64 user for a very long time now (my first new '64 was £300) and was in the first few issues of ZZAP! even as a demi wizard on The Adventure Helpline (my name was Steve Williams then).

What I wanted to mention was the subject of consoles, as it seems everyone I used to know on the '64 (3 or 4 years ago) went console crazy for a while. However, we should bear in mind that many people are coming back to their C64's (must be the shock of £45 a game).

Regarding the state of '64 software; one should not worry unduly, because as the recession lifts, more money will be available for more game development.

Also, onto a point about all the letters you receive saying 'where can you get such and such a game'. I would like to give a company a mention who specialise in both PD software and in buying or selling second hand originals. They are: Electric Boys Software, 16 Grovehill Rd, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6PJ. For information send a large SAE, stating whether you are interested in PD or originals.

SA Williams, Horsham, West Sussex.

● *Oh the joys of quiet market towns in deepest Shropshire. Our biggest recession this year has been Steve's beard. Never mind Steve — the goatee looks 'out' anyway.*
LM

64 ON TAP

Dear Lloyd,
I have a serious problem! Whenever I bung your covertapes into my datasette they never load (actually, I don't think any of your covertapes have ever loaded). It could be my datasette but I've only had it four months. Sometimes when I'm loading, the tape just stops, and when I try to fast forward or rewind it doesn't respond. When I tap the C64 a bit it sometimes starts to work again. Cue questions:

1) I'm going to get a disk drive. Are *Bubble Bobble*, *Rainbow Islands*, *Turbo Outrun* and *Shinobi* on disk, and if so, where can I purchase them from?

Try the Forcefield Plaza. If it's available, they should be able to find it for you.

2) Can you please (x 1,000,000) put a review in your brill mag for *Outrun Europa*, *Turrican*, *Strider* and *Turrican 2*?

We only review games as and when they're released, though you're in luck with* Outrun Europa*, which came out on budget last month (see Issue Six). As for the others, if you want to obtain back issues through the Forcefield Plaza, the mags you require are ZZAP! 64, numbers 61, 57 and 70 respectively.

Please help me as I've had these problems since I was born.

Suhail Sarwar, Oldham, Lancashire

PS Keep up the excellent work, you ought to get a rise of 99.9%

● *It sounds to me like your 64 is in need of professional attention. Loose connections will inevitably lead to unreliability, so get in touch with a qualified technician. The longer you leave it, the more irreparable the damage could get; not to mention the danger of electric shocks.*
LM
PS 99.9% eh? It's a start I suppose...

CARTBREAK RIDGE

Dear Lloyd,
Having been a reader since the 'good old days' (ZZAP! 64), I would like to say how nice it is to see you back again. A lot of things have changed since then; reviewers and editors have come and gone, colour has been introduced to the magazine along with many others, all for the best. However, I am sad to say that the general state of the C64 market has taken a turn for the worst. Much as I hate to admit it, and I would dearly love to see the C64 prosper well into the next millenium, it looks set to follow the Spectrum, Amstrad etc, into the annals of computer history.

It has already proved itself to be the cream of the 8-bits, outlasting them all, and rightly so. However, the advent of 16-bit computers and, more recently, consoles, and the failure of cartridge software for the C64 have only served to speed up it's demise. Forgive me for being pessimistic, but I am one of the faithful few who have stuck with the machine through thick and thin, resisting the

LETTER OF THE MONTH

HEY, JOE!

Dear Sir,
I've sent your completed survey questionnaire. I've filled it in on behalf of my son Joe (age six), who has had his C64 for just over a year. He discovered your magazine four issues ago and saves all his pocket money to buy it each month.

He has answered all the questions honestly and I believe you couldn't hope for better answers. He is genuinely thrilled with your publication and I don't believe you could improve it as far he is concerned.

The reason I write is to let you know just how much he loves COMMODORE FORCE and in particular the covertapes. I don't believe the questionnaire answers show you just how much pleasure the magazine brings to Joe each month.

On behalf of Joe, many thanks for a superb magazine. This letter was written at his request.

Russell Pointing

● ***There's nothing more gratifying than hearing from a happy reader. We do our best, so getting a letter like this makes all the effort worthwhile. Please accept this months star letter and a mystery prize will be in the post very soon.***
LM

CREATURE COMFORTS

Dear Lloyd,
I've been collecting your mag for ages and I think it's RADICAL!

I really love cute games but I can't seem to get my hands on the full game of *Trolls* or *Creatures*. I was wondering if you would be so kind as to put this letter in your next brilliant mag and to (pretty please) send me a copy of *Trolls* and some cheats.

I know you will because you are so kind. If you don't it doesn't matter. I did get the *Trolls* demo on May's issue and it's brilliant — that's why I want the full game.

I'm really looking forward to June's issue. Well gotta go...

Tracey Whitaker

● ***Trolls isn't out at the time of writing, athough Flair assure us that it will by the time you read this. Creatures, however, has been on budget for some time now — try the Forcefield Plaza.***
LM

TEAM FOR HIRE

Dear Lloyd,
I am Peter of The Eighteam, you may or may not be aware that we are the authors of those popular games *The Extricator* and *The Energem Enigma*. Anyway, to the point of this letter. Prof Roberts has asked me to write to you and pass on a letter to your readers, I hope you will print it as he really does need help. So that's all from me, over to the man himself.

I am Professor Roberts, I see from your last issue of COMMODORE FORCE that a number of your readers will be attempting to help me in searching for the Energems on the planet Edam. I would like to express my gratitude to these brave and adventurous individuals, and wish them every success in their endeavours. It has been a long time now since I was rescued from Arg by that super-human individual who has earned himself the title of The Extricator. As you are probably aware, I was given a truth serum whilst in captivity, and the opposition are now fully aware that I am after the Energems to power my new and most ingenious invention, although they are not fully aware of it's potential. I am sure though, that if they are to discover the energems have been delivered to me safely, they will stop at nothing to steal my most innovative project to date. I have given a code name to this scenario should it arise, and it shall be called *The Cyclic Phenomenon.*

If in the near future, any of your readers would like to help me in *The Cyclic Phenomenon*, I would suggest they send a self addressed, stamped envelope for a full briefing. They can rest assured that the Eighteam will pass on any mail to me. I must apologise for not giving my own address, but as you can appreciate, I am in the same predicament as one Salman Rushdie.

Finally, I would like to thank all those readers attempting to help me, and to show my gratitude I will reveal a code that they may use on their travels on Edam. Try typing SPEC MATE on the very first location, as soon as the game has loaded.

Thank you all...

Prof Roberts, Phd

Write to the Eighteam at: The Eighteam, 33 Holst Close, Stanford-Le-Hope, Essex SS17 8RB

● ***I'm confused!***
LM

temptation of 16-bit technology (mainly due to the price of games) and feel sad that such a great machine is being neglected by software companies and the public alike. I agree totally with Mr Denham's letter, Issue Three; it's all a question of money and survival in an increasingly competitive market. Unfortunately, I can't see consoles selling for a fiver at car boot sales in the near future, despite the current recession.

Just looking through recent issues of COMMODORE FORCE proves my point. What's happened to Ocean, System 3, US Gold etc? Whereas it was unusual for there not to to be several games from such publishers in each issue, now we're lucky to get any. As I've already stated, it's down to survival — the increasing popularity of budget software for the C64 meant a decrease in revenue and sales from full-price releases, whereas on the Amiga and ST their profit margins are such that this isn't a great problem. I would guess that these companies have pledged allegiance to the 16-bit machines, where the real money is to be made, although having not looked at any Amiga or ST magazines recently, I could be wrong.

The biggest threat, however, comes from the consoles. They appear attractive, as they are relatively cheap but, as many parents with console-owning children have doubtlessly now discovered, the monopolies of Nintendo and Sega mean ridiculous prices for games. Alright, the graphics and sound are superior but, as has been said so many times, there's no substitute for playability — which is why with games like *Microprose Soccer*, *Armalyte* and *The Last Ninja* there's no beating the C64.

I really hope I'm wrong, but the future of the C64 looks bleak. Rest assured one thing; I'll stick with it to the very end. Long live the C64.

JM Hurrell, St Austell, Cornwall.

● ***My my, we are getting cynical, aren't we? Seriously, even though some software producers have turned their backs on the '64, there's still plenty of new software around (and in the pipeline), not to mention a back catalogue of incredible volume. The machine may have passed its heyday (arguably), but it's not ready to lie down just yet.***
LM

HALF BAKED

Dear Lloyd,
I wish to introduce myself as Speck. I'm half Vulcan, half Scottish (see my surname). Some of your more knowledgeable readers may have heard of my uncle, twice removed at warp 7.9, Spock. Like my uncle, I have a fanaticism with accuracy so I've written this exigent letter.

In Issue Four I was extremely disappointed to find ERRORS!

H.A.T.E is not the only diagonal shoot-'em-up —what about the amazing *Armalyte*?

Secondly, the trade description act 1968, amended 1972, states:

It's illegal to describe goods or services incorrectly...

And what do you do, I'll tell you — the front cover said 'Every C64 Flight Sim reviewed and rated'. What about C64c and C128 ones though? I said I liked to be accurate. I was also shocked to see how many flight s(t)imulations you hadn't reviewed — *Falcon Patrol, Falcon Patrol II, Acrojet, Advanced Tactical Fighter* and *First Strike*. Don't tell me you couldn't write about *First Strike*, it was on Issue One! The chance of making two c*** u*s (first word being a male hen without the 'rel', the second word being up) is 1 in 56764.6874, which is about as likely as me being incorrect.

Apart from all that whinging I'm pleased

TO BE, OR NOT TBDD?

Yo Lloyd,
No sheep jokes please. I was just wondering what's happening with the TBDD001 3.5" disk drive for the C64.

I've had my C64 for five years now and have been considering a disk drive but delayed buying one until I found out about the 3.5".

I've been buying your mag since Issue Two now and chucked Commodore F****t out the window 'cos your mag is much better.

Keep up the good work.

Mark Hall, Cardiff

● Wot no PS's? That makes a refreshing change. In answer to your disk drive query — forget it! The system has been bugged from the start, hence the delay. When it eventually does arrive, it's more than likely to have such a limited distribution that decent software support is unlikely to emerge.
LM

OUT DATED

Dear Lloyd,
Let me start by saying that I find COMMODORE FORCE quite informative overall, and I find it to be the best magazine for C64 users. However, when *will* you all get your act together?

In the last issue of ZZAP! 64 you got the info regarding loading the covertapes scrambled. Now in the April edition of COMMODORE FORCE you have done the same thing again. The games listed on the tapes are in the correct order but they are switched around on the tape covers.

However, the main problem is this. In the March Issue Chris, Miles and Ian all tested *Dalek Attack*. Now if you go to April's issue it would appear that everybody concerned with COMMODORE FORCE climbed into a Tardis and legged it back a whole year and didn't make it back. Open on page 66 and at the bottom of the page, on the right hand side, is a red blob which proudly tells us that the May issue hits the shelves on the 25th of March 1992! Does this mean a new international date line has been drawn up? Does it mean we all have to borrow a Tardis to get the May edition? Just look at it — coming next month — last year!

Please try and get yourselves more organised in future lads. It's a great mag overall, but these constant little foul ups tend to annoy us perfectionists.

Get the Ed to give you a 50% pay increase because whatever you're earning can't possibly be enough.
JC

● Apologies for the odd little mistake, but remember — a lot of time and work goes into each issue of your fave Commodore mag. Despite checking, double-checking and triple-checking, occasional errors will pass unnoticed. I hope these are few enough not to spoil your enjoyment.
LM

PRODIGAL SON RETURNS

Dear Lloyd & crew,
I must confess that I strayed from the flock, but thanks to your magazine and WH Smiths I am now a born-again C64 fan. I was distracted to the Sega Master System by the heavy advertising campaign of Sega. For several months I was fooled into paying £30 for several games which soon lost their appeal. Whilst walking through WH Smiths I was confronted by Issue Three of your magazine and I remembered the good old days of the C64, so I purchased it. I was not

IDIOTS GUIDE

Dear Lloyd,
I would like to congratulate your whole team on the new COMMODORE FORCE. From cover to cover it's written in an interesting, informative way, covering all ranges of knowledge, without falling into the trap of treating people like idiots (i.e making out you're some weird beings from out of space).

It's sad to see so many 64's in small ads; however, this doesn't mean the death of the 64 but new owners. As it's software we're most concerned with, the market will still be there.

I recently got a seller to split what was in his advert and bought a colour printer and mouse for the price of a hand held game, something other readers may want to try.

When software houses produce games, why don't they put infinite lives in as an option, and why do they make many games so hard? It's understandable on arcade games as the more played, the more money spent. When you buy a game it's a one-off payment, no matter how many times you restart. Obviously with the interest in cheats, I can't be alone in thinking this.

What are the advantages of *Mini Office 2*, over *Mini Office*? The price difference is hefty.
M Wald, Wokingham, Berks

● Would you really want games to be easier? Look at it from this angle — arcade games need to be more instantly accessible, otherwise people would play them once and

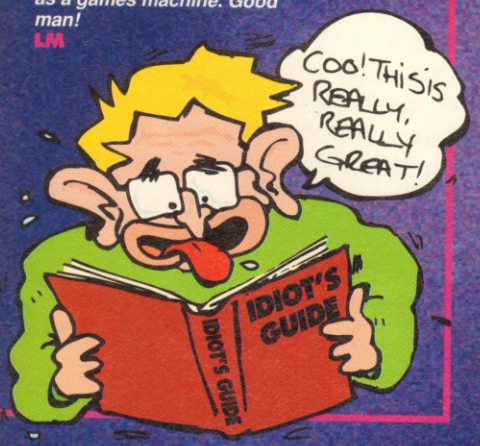
with the mag.
Speck O'Dirt
PS Don't you love brackets (eh?).
PSS I feel sorry for the S's, it's usually the P's which get used more.
PSSS Aniseed isn't for the eyes, it improves nerve level increasing hand-eye co-ordination. So you should buy everyone else aniseed. Coincidentally, aniseed is the seed of anise, so why isn't it called aniseseed?

● *Right my old China, so you like to be accurate do you? Well let's have a bit of a pick through your letter, shall we?*
1) Armalyte is NOT diagonally scrolling, it's as blatant a horizontaler as you'll find.
2) What about C128 Flight Sims? I don't believe we claimed to cover them.
3) First Strike (which, incidentally, appeared on Issue Two) is an Afterburner-style shoot-'em-up, so should Afterburner have been included? If so, is G-LOC also a simulation? I don't think so, and the less said about ATF the better. As for Falcon Patrol, it's another left-to-right shooter, for crying out loud. Even Acrojet actually displays your aircraft as a sprite on screen, so is it a true simulation? We decided not.
4) Cockerel is spelt with an 'e' in the middle so put that in your Captains log and file it.
I think too much going where no man has gone before seems to be having a slightly deleterious (LMLWD) effect on your superior Vulcan intellect (if you are of Vulcan blood that is — I have my doubts).
Perhaps a quick slap of the kipper will bring you round.
LM

disappointed, but now I am addicted to the game called *Batty*. I can't put it down, especially as I have infinite lives with my Action Replay cartridge.
What I am trying to say is that the C64 is more fun and more cost-friendly to its users. I was a fool to stray, I will not stray again.
Stuart J Brown, Gidea Park, Essex.

● *t's never too late to see the error of your ways. As with all good stories, yours has a happy ending and one I believe we can all learn from.*
LM

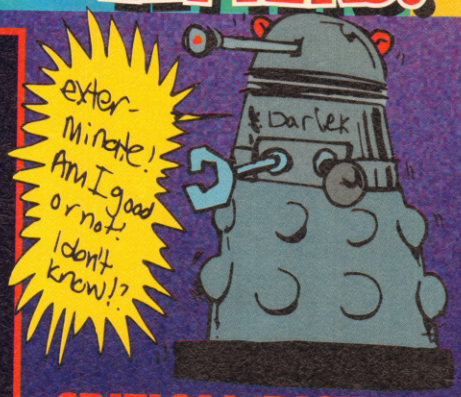
not bother again. On the other hand, when you spend £12 on a new computer game, you want something called lastability. *Having completed a game, it loses a lot of its appeal — I suppose it's all down to personal attitude.*
Onto your more serious point, Mini Office *only contains four programs. It's tape-based but if you're a new or inexperienced user, it should be a reasonable start. If you're a little more serious, you might be well advised to fork out for* MO2 *— it's a comprehensive system available at either £15 cassette or £20 disk format.*
It's nice to see someone still looking at the 64 as a serious piece of equipment as well as a games machine. Good man!
LM



THE NEXT GENERATION

Dear Lloyd,
This is Jean Luc Picard speaking (well writing actually).
In my spare time I always play games on my C64 because it's far better than those computers I have on board the Enterprise. I must go where no-one has gone before, so I'm writing you this letter.
First of all I want to say your letter pages aren't getting boring (Issue Four — last letter). Read the Wet Kipper in Issue Three. Is that boring or what? I must say I feel sorry that you haven't got a mega-turbo data-recorder. I have one here, and it loads all games in less than one second. That's still a long loading time, but I've got buckets full of patience, so I can wait that one second.
I love Reel Action Eight, side B. Keep putting games like that on, and you'll be light-years ahead.
The last thing I'm going to tell you is something about the Letter of the Month in Issue One. I've been on Magazinia and I know what happened with the ZZAP!ers — they became FORCEers! I'm going to leave you now, but I'll write back soon (unless I've found the paradise, because then I *won't* write back!).
Alexander 'Picard' Ensing, The Netherlands.

● *Uh oh! We seem to be getting overrun by Trekkies this month — what with Mr Spock's nephew appearing elsewhere in these very pages. By the way, any readers intending to use their C64's for astro-navigation purposes in the near future should be extremely careful. Extensive application software is required and at least a fundamental user knowledge. 1500-man starships are weighty pieces of equipment and a lot for the little C64 to handle. Give it plenty of rest between hyperspace jumps however, and you should be OK.*
LM



CRITICAL DISTAIN

Dear Lloyd,
I'm afraid that this is a complaining letter, so here are a few complaints:
1) Why didn't you print my last letter? I was rather peed-off about that, as I lost the bet I had with my fish and I had to give him my bike.
I hope you don't keep him in a bowl, as this could lead to spillage.
2) Why do you seem to be attempting to break the world record for the most c**p games you can get on two covertapes? On the average tape there's only one decent game at the most. There are too many text adventures as well. I like the odd bash (excuse the pun) but not everyone does.
So if you like the adventures, why complain? Everyone has their preferences and we can't attempt to satisfy these every issue. As for the quality of Reel Action, let me put it this way — COMMODORE FORCE tapes are played by tens of thousands of readers who don't complain in the slightest. Doesn't this suggest we're doing something right?
3) Why is the subscription offer so rubbish? Almost everyone has a joystick, so they're not going to want another one — and the light gun's a dead loss as you can't buy any more games for them.
There are many readers perfectly happy with our subscription offer. As far as I can remember, you're the first to grumble. Doesn't this indicate something too?
4) Why did you give *Trolls* such a high mark? The demo on the cover tape was rubbish! The graphics are messy and washed out, you can't control how high you jump and the main sprite is useless!
May I say that I totally disagree with you.
5) How about getting some PD demos on the covertape? *Mc Gottifant* was very good — how about some multi-part demos?
We will include PD from time to time. The problem is that most demos are disk-based, and extensive tape access is often more trouble than it's worth.
6) How come the COMMODORE FORCE reviewers raved about *Dalek Attack*, whilst the COMMODORE FORMAT reviewers hated it. Were you reviewing the same game?
I know who I'd believe.
That's it really. Sorry it's a long letter, but I had a lot to say.
Alex Dobson, Birstall, Leicester

● *Never let it be said that we at COMMODORE FORCE can't take a bit of criticism. Remember, the more constructive the better — it's your magazine too, you know.*
LM

UMER LOVES JAVARIA

Yo Lloyd 'The Lollypop' Mangram,
Welcome back soldier! Now with you back, hi-score page gone and tech section introduced, COMMODORE FORCE is now at last 100% perfect. It's the best, ultramegagobsmackingly-awesome (UPLWD) Commodore mag. Now answer some of my mind-tangling (UPLWD again) questions, or we Pakistanis are going to produce more Khans to wreck you (as if Imran, Jahangir and Jansher weren't enough).

1) I think people are taking advantage of the 'Wet Kipper Award' to get their letters printed. Observe Mrs Imlah and Mr Paul in Issue Three. Come on, nobody is that stupid!

You'd be surprised.

2) A word of advice to those Mario/Sonic freaks. Why don't you stick with Clyde/Dizzy instead. *Creatures* can beat 'Sonic The Craphog' ***(Hardy Ha Ha — LM)*** any day. And US Gold's *Great Giana Sisters* is much better than 'Mario the Bros Lover' ***(Oh please! — LM)***. So forget the crappy consoles, stick with the cuddly C64.

Cuddly? I'm not so sure. I find those function keys can give you a nasty jab in the bajungas.

3) I don't think the C64 is gonna phase out in the next two or three years. When my console, ST, PC and Amiga-owning friends play games on my C64, they really enjoy it. They're especially impressed with the sonics and immense playability. They love *WWF* of course. They bought the game for their machines, but in spite of the incredible graphics their versions lack playability, and they agree on this point. Even they can't believe the C64 is phasing out!

You just can't keep a good dog down. C64 phasing out? Nah!

4) Can overseas subscribers take part in your competitions?

Certainly, although the closing dates may make this impossible in some instances.

Umer Pasha, Lahore, Pakistan

PS Please call this letter Umer Loves Javaria.

● ***Your Khans are no match for our Hirds — Thora, Douglas, etc. You have been warned.*** **LM**

GET 'EM IN

Dear Lloyd,
I'm not a very happy person. You put in your mag every month the day the next issue is coming out. I get up that morning and go 'oh yes, I'm going to buy COMMODORE FORCE today' but when I go to the shop they say it is not out yet. 'Come back in two days' they say.

Two days later, I go back to the shop and there it is on the shelf, right in front of me.

I'm sorry I have to complain (well not really) about the best mag in the world.

Now for some questions.

1) Can you tell me where I can get a copy of *Boulder Dash Three*, I already have One, Two, Four and the Construction Kit.

Try giving Capri Marketing a ring on 0628 891 101; they may be able to help.

2) Will *Creatures 2* ever be out on budget?

It should be someday, but don't hold your breath.

3) Where is Ludlow?

Get on the A435 Northbound and turn left at Birmingham.

4) What was the first computer out?

A novel device made up of wires and beads. Invented thousands of years ago, this mathematical marvel was called the abacus.

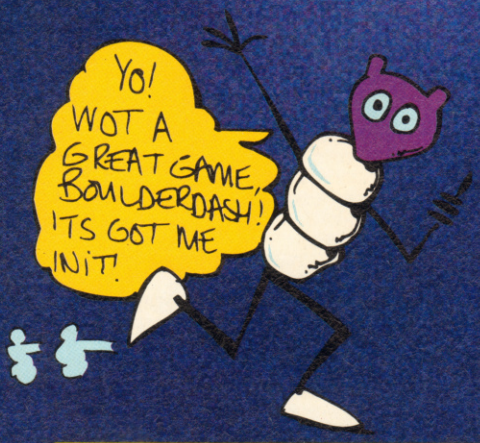
PS What was the first computer game on the C64?

Barry McQuillen, Stockton, Cleveland

● ***Well, it's a little known fact that the first game was called Connector. This involved attaching the cassette recorder to your C64 without blowing yourself up.***

Okay, I admit it — I'm not entirely sure. The amount of games written in bedrooms at that time would have been phenomenal, so I don't believe it'd be possible to say. Can any readers make a suggestion?

Just imagine those two extra days you have to wait for COMMODORE FORCE are without true existence. Two, being an integer, is simply the value of units (in this case days) given after the desired event (the arrival of COMMODORE FORCE in the newsagents). Simply subtract two from all parts of the equation and you will find the delay differential between projected and actual arrival has a co-efficient of zero, leaving us with a vectored waiting period, which is in turn, of no value (Eh? — Ed). **LM**



SNIPS

More smile-inducing one-line wonders

■ I was wondering if you still had your bike and are still having trouble with the hills around Ludlow.

James Purvis, West Wittering

● ***At the moment I'm saving up for one of those mountain bikes. Barring a major disaster I should have the cash by the end of 1997.***

■ Please, please help me. I have a Commodore Pet.

Joanne Bloxham, Nuneaton, Warwickshire.

● ***For crying out loud, sell it and get a '64.***

■ My friend says C64 cartridge graphics are better than cassettes. Is he right?

Mandy Heer, Leicester

● ***Actual graphical definition is exactly the same be it tape, disk, cart or wagon.***

■ I used to get Bunty until I heard about Commodore Force.

Gillian Martin, Perthshire

● ***This is the first time I've been as old as I am now.***

And so ends another months mail. I'll wind down with a bit of a moan I'm afraid — please, please, stop sending SAEs with your letters as I don't have time to make personal replies. Much as I would like to, it's physically impossible. Anyway, take care and I'll see you next month. In the mean time get writing to me at:

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Once upon a time there was a happy little man living in a forest. He'd loads of problems with noisy woodland animals, but it was unlikely he'd have wanted to sleep or settle down to relax anyway. You see, this man was a COMMODORE FORCE subscriber, and spent so much time playing his Reel Action tapes and reading the editorial perfection of the magazine, that doing anything else seemed pretty darn pointless.

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Then, one fateful day, our little friend popped out of his woodland abode to buy a disk drive. He'd begun to tire of the trials and tribulations of magnetic-tape booting, and rather liked the idea of quick, clean and efficient disk access. While he was there, he renewed his subscription to COMMODORE FORCE — and was delighted to discover that he could, instead of tapes, have Reel Action disks. Quickly, he specified his wish to experience this oh so wondrous offer on the coupon included in his favourite FORCE magazine...

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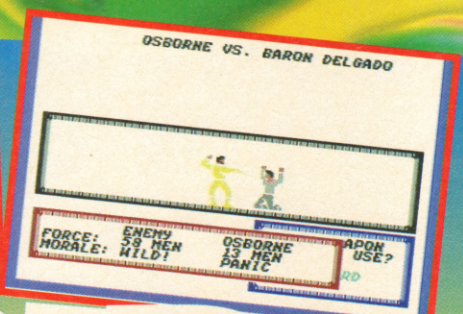
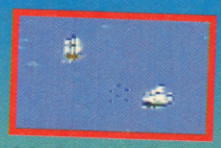
● Pursued by the formidable flying sheep, Ian bravely ran away.





● Left: Ian panics and decides upon a different technique — begging.

● In times like this, you need a decent boat, a good cannon and a lot of patience.

PIRATES

● Kixx XL, £4.99 cassette, £7.99 disk

Shiver me timbers ye hearties, and other nauseating Treasure Island clichés. *Pirates* is back on the C64, but is it worth your pieces of eight or does it deserve the black spot? IAN 'SILVER LONG-JOHNS' OSBORNE sets sail...

It's great to see the Kixx XL label carried over to the good old C64 as ordinary, everyday cassette boxes can't cope with the complex game packaging. However, the extra box space for *Pirates* is pointless (the map supplied with the original is absent for a start) — where were Kixx XL when the likes of *Silent Service* and *Gunship* were released?

Pirates is (according to the box) an 'Action-Adventure Simulation', a 'challenging combination of history, adventure and intrigue'. There's plenty of history here, but the adventure's pretty weak and after the first few plays intrigue goes right out of the port-hole.

On loading, you can start a new career, reload a saved game or embark on a historical expedition. Beggining a new career is the standard game, outlining the adventures of a pirate captain from his first expedition to retirement. A number of historical eras are available and you can also pick a specific nautical skill such as navigation, fencing, gunnery, medicine or wit & charm. Impressive, eh? Well, no — despite the extensive list of options the game itself is too shallow to sink a canoe, let alone a Spanish Galleon.

Pieces Of Hate...

Much of the game is spent sailing from port to port buying and selling, like one of those dud trading games from the early eighties but, being pirates, you get to plunder other vessels. When a ship is sighted there's the option (via the usual tedious menus) to engage in battle, accessing an appallingly bland combat screen where two tiny ships plod around firing cannons at each other. After firing off a broadside, you have to wait while the guns reload — however, the programmers don't seem to realise that a seventeenth-century sailing vessel had TWO sets of cannons, one along each side. When the port guns are fired, do the starboard ones unload in sympathy?

However thinly you spread your troops and guns, it has no effect on the game. Your ships behave as one vessel for cargo purposes and entire gun loads can be transfered at a moment's notice! Also, only one ship can be used in a scrap, however many are in the fleet. A bit of strategy role-playing wouldn't go amiss, such as assigning crew and cargo and developing the officer's nautical skills. Alas, this element is almost completely glossed over. Hand-to-hand fighting is just as bad — everyone on board disappears, except for you and the opposing captain who fight it out with swords. The 'action' is abysmal; two bland, featureless seamen wobbling over a plain white background.

Perhaps the biggest problem is the complete lack of focus. You can be captured by an enemy vessel, eventually being traded by your former comrades, marooned and later rescued, but you can never, ever die. There's no set amount of money to aim for either, and with no objectives to fulfil, the game's just one long drag.

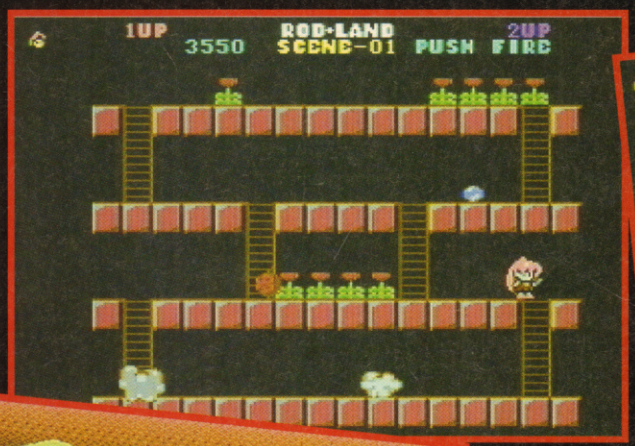
Pirates is a very boring strategy game with too many badly-presented menus and too little variation. Perhaps the programmers should've stuck to the old naval traditions of rum, scurvy and the lash. Or maybe not...

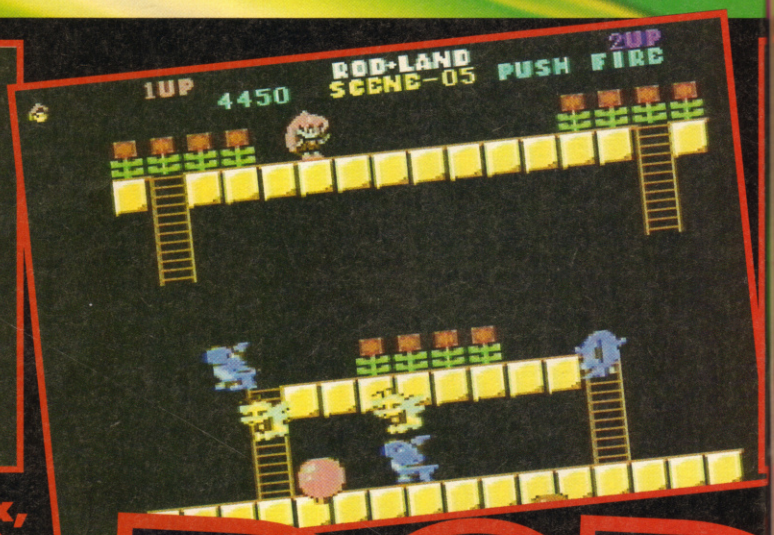
IAN! 38%

CHRIS!

● It was with much yo-ho-ho-ing and bottle-rumming that I loaded up *Pirates*. All of a sudden, the thoughts of enjoying roaming the high seas and plundering wooden vessels faded — it's just so remarkably basic to behold. The text menus are placed on white backgrounds, with no scenery at all, a flaw also present during the sword fights! Going to battle against merchant ships doesn't add any excitement or depth; the opponents are either blind or full of compassion. Their shots are forever wide and visiting the towns is like riding a bicycle in a never-ending circle, with many places offering exactly the same areas to explore. Perhaps it's just my way of thinking, but countries do vary from each other, don't they? A historic setting plus a prehistoric design adds up to one thing — an ancient game.

41%





RODL

● Kixx, £3.99 cassette

He may appear cuddly, cute and loveable but, with Kixx's newey in hand, MILES 'HOTROD' GUTTERY sets out to prove he's tougher than he looks.

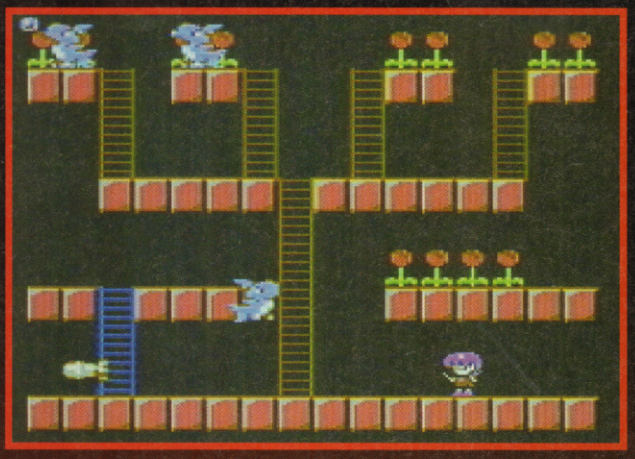
Bleurgh!

As well as being too sickeningly sweet for words, Tam and Rit are tiny little fairies in a strange and hostile land. Their poor mom's been kidnapped by an evil demon and imprisoned in the mysterious 'Maboots' tower and the pixie-like pair are her only hope. To help in their quest, a village elder bestows upon them the Rods of Sheesanomo; powerful, mystic artefacts, hidden for centuries, surrounded by folklore and quite painful if you're biffed on the head with one — and that's what Tam and Rit do. Stopping only to take the rainbow shoes from their pop, they make their way to the tower.

On entering the strange construction, the two are confronted by a room consisting of several platforms accessed by ladders. Atop these walkways roam several strange animals. Suddenly, one such creature lunges for the cutesome twosome. Rit ducks out of the way just in time, as Tam brings his rod down heavily on the nastie's head. Stunned for a moment, the evil one is unable to move, so thinking quickly Tam picks him up with the rod and smashes him against the floor. Once, twice, and on the third bash the poor beastie vanishes out of existence. In his place lies a shiny metal object. At that moment another creature comes lurching towards young Tam who, in his haste to escape, trips over the metal thing. There's a resounding explosion and two more baddies cease to be problem. It's then that our loveable heroes realise another 39 tricky screens stand between them and their beloved mother's freedom.

Every eight screens, a big guardian pops up to test the reactions and rodding ability of the fairies to the limit. These include tearful crocodiles, smiley whales, a droopy elephant — all vicious, but so sweet it's a shame to hit them.

In addition to the baddies, each level contains loads of swaying flowers. Collect all of these and you enter the 'extra game' — for a short period, every baddy drops a letter when killed. Collect all the letters to make up the word 'extra' and a rather nice fairy pops up to give you an additional life.



● Rit and Tam — Kindly faries or sadistic, gore-hungry warriors? You should see what they do to to sharks... ugh!

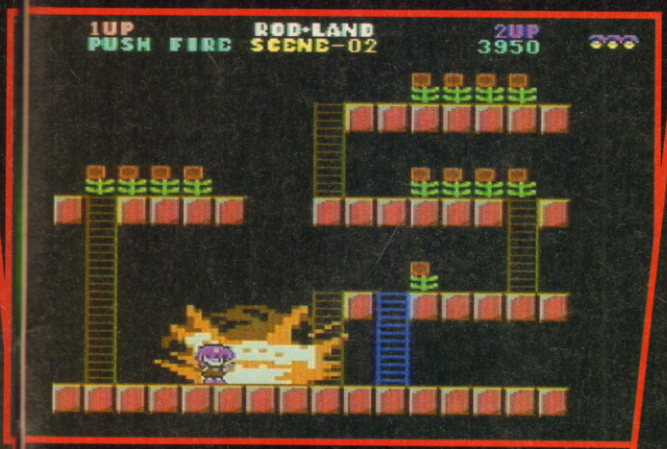
We've got a rod and we're gonna to use it

Inspired by the classic *Bubble Bobble*, *Rodland* is a refreshingly playable and jolly outing, especially with two players. Co-operating to dispose of baddies, then racing hell for leather to get the bonuses first is a delight to behold. Then there's the charming graphics, particularly the main characters; they're

CHRIS!

● The degree of cuteness packed into *Rodland* is absolutely sickening; fluffy squirrels, rotund elephants, etc. but it's so compulsive to play, you'll risk the chance of splattering your monitor with stomach ejections anyday. Blatting the furry felons and collecting the muchous objects is easy to get to grips with, it's also good to see a two-player mode included, an essential option in games of this type. It's hardly a prime candidate for any lastability trophies, but there's that little something that makes it so inviting, what ever time of day. And at this price, why worry?

81%



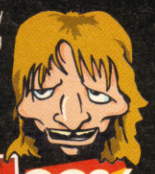
DLAND

excellently drawn with flowing hair bouncing as they trot around the screen. Just as good are the natty tunes, perfectly complementing gameplay with merry little melodies jigging away on the presentation screens.

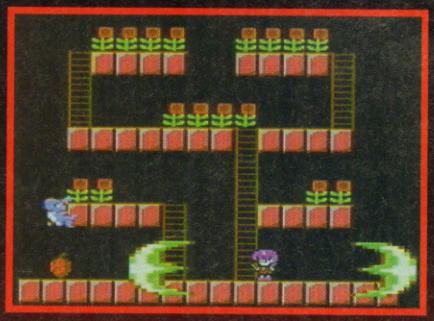
With such simple and enjoyable gameplay, it's hard to think of many downers to mention. Even the well thought-out multiload is as painless as a multiload can be, with each (fairly long) section loading very quickly. With only forty screens I did at first harbour some doubts as to the long term difficulty level, especially after bounding through the first few levels with consummate ease. Later on though, things get a whole lot tougher. New features appear such as teleporters which, when activated, transport the duo to another part of the screen. These are useful for getting out of sticky situations, but you could wind up landing on top of another nasty. Out of the frying pan, into the proverbial toaster as they say.

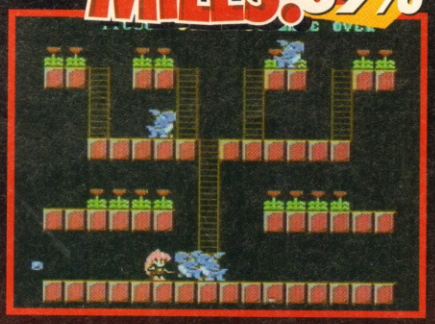
So it's all perfectly-cute, perfectly-paced action which any fan of the genre will lap up. I could waffle on saying it's all been seen before, that it's uncannily similar to *Bubble Bobble* etc, but what's the point. Fun's the name of the game and *Rodland* has it coming out of it's little ears. Interest is enhanced further by the novel method of baddy extermination — swinging them back and forth over your head is both effective and worth a smile.

Whilst writing this I'm glancing out of the window. It's a glorious day outside, the sun's out, blue sky smiles upon the countryside, Spring's in full swing and *Rodland* is a warm and engaging 'watching cricket on the village green while eating triangular cucumber sandwiches and sipping tea from a china cup' kind of game. Howzat!



MILES! 89%





JAMES!

● It owes more than a little to *Bubble Bobble* design-wise, and it's difficulty level is hardy phenomenal, but *Rodland* is just so shamelessly cute you'll have no alternative but to wrap it up in a warm blanket and feed it milk and biscuits. On the other hand, if you want to play it you'll not be disappointed. The platform antics are of a very high standard, and it's two-player mode is great fun, but there's a massive question mark that hangs over it's lastability. For £3.99 it's a bargain, and fans of the genre will be thrilled to bits — just bear in mind that as slickly executed as it might be, you'll tire of it before the one-month mark.

80%

GALE WARNING

■ **PRESENTATION** ■ STATIC PICCIES AND UNOBTRUSIVE MULTILOAD — **85%**

■ **GRAPHICS** ■ FULL OF JOLLY TUNES WHICH YOU'LL HUM FOR DAYS — **92%**

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■ **HOOKABILITY** ■ INSTANTLY ACCESSIBLE, INSTANTLY FUN — **94%**

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FORCE FACTOR 84%

● The Hit Squad
£3.99 Cassette

SKULL AND CROSSBONES

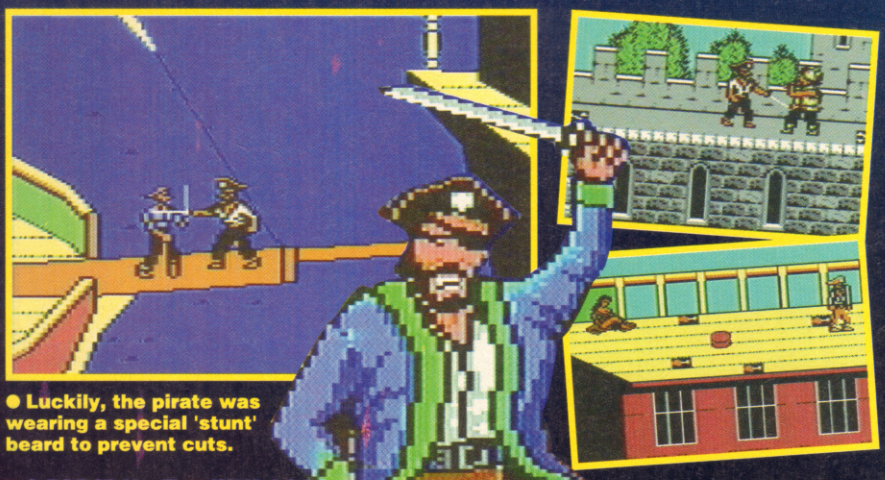
The skull and crossbones design's a familiar one. Death, poison and pirates — a warning sign used to deter the inquisitive. CHRIS 'DOMESTOS' HAYWARD throws up over board.

What influenced the stupid names that Pirates awarded themselves? In the case of Captain Hook it's self-explanatory, but with titles such as Captain Pugwash and Long John Silver, you wonder what the blazes they got up to at a weekend. A large majority had an infatuation with beards — Bluebeard, Blackbeard, Red, Yellow, Pink and Greenbeard. Whether they actually dyed their facial hair is a mystery — fearing a bloke with fluorescent chin tufts is hard to picture — but it must have worked, considering the amount of goods they plundered. *Skull And Crossbones* is a vain attempt to recreate days on the high seas, when drinking rum, eating maggot-ridden biscuits and walking around on planks was a pirates daily routine. Fighting and stealing was also a popular pastime, and it was this lifestyle that brought the duo of One Eye and Red Dog into the world of pillaging and 'yo-ho-hoing'. Not disheartened by names resembling a Cantonese meal, the pair set off in search of adventure. It was not long before they heard rumours of a hoard of gold, hidden by an evil sorcerer and, without stopping to compare cutlasses, they set off across eight levels of pirate-infested land.

Similar to many beat-'em-ups, you control one either One Eye or Red Dog in their search for hidden treasure. The basic walk-right-and-hack style is enhanced — slightly — by a few ladders to climb and ropes to slide down, although every area is a set scrolling route, so no different paths can be taken. Instead, only by killing all of the enemy pirates that appear can you scroll to the next screen. Several sword-fighting techniques can be used on the 'sea-dogs', although pressing fire will usually suffice. Health can be restored thanks to chicken legs that are scattered around, and bags of treasure can be uncovered by swiping special 'pirate squares' that occasionally furnish the ground.

Irate Pirates

Although there's a two-player mode it isn't simultaneous, so don't gear up for any Double Dragon-style brawls. Disappointed? There's more to come I'm afraid, and one particular flaw has to be mentioned. Because every baddie has to be slain before progressing, you can be dueling five people and receiving multiple hits from some far off bottle-thrower. Should you turn tail and run, however, you can end up stranded on a screen with no way of going back. So that's a choice of either losing lives or forever wandering round an enemy-bare screen. Participating in the duels is very unsatisfying: the opposition turn into powdery blemishes and vanish like smoke when dying, which is appropriate for a sci-fi movie, but not an 18th-Century pirate yarn. The sprites are cartoonish, but the animation breaks no boundaries whatsoever. 'Jolly Roger' tunes and effects are well used and the surrounding scenery is neat, but several areas look startling familiar, with only minor graphical changes. Getting involved is instinctive, simple fun, yet the shapeless fights and scantiness of depth only stir up feelings of claustrophobia. *Skull and Crossbones* is a historic setting transformed into an historic, dated game with few laughs to be had. One you'll borrow off a mate and end up losing.



● Luckily, the pirate was wearing a special 'stunt' beard to prevent cuts.

JAMES!

● Gerald had always wanted to be a pirate; their inarticulate and often violent mannerisms had always appealed to the rebellious side of his middle-class upbringing. Of course, it irritated the living daylights out of his parents — they where often known to say 'for God's sake man, you're fifty-two and a corporate lawyer'. Nevertheless, it was an ocean life that he craved and nothing could deter him from his dream of buxom maidens and strapping sailors. Especially the ones with beards — but then again, he'd *always* had strange tastes in women... Now, if I had to recommend an alternative to him, *Skull and Crossbones* wouldn't be the one I'd choose. For a start, it's a computer game and can't recreate several key elements (such as the facial hair). Secondly, it's quite astonishingly poor. Sad, but true.

39%

CHRIS! 52%

GALE WARNING

PRESENTATION QUESTIONABLE MULTILOAD BUT MANY CONTINUES — **46%**

GRAPHICS DECENT DETAIL BUT NOT ENOUGH OF IT — **59%**

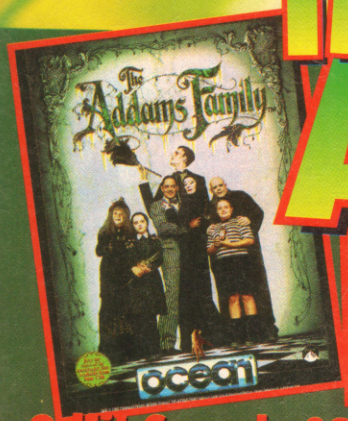
SOUND SOLID, BARREL FULL OF TUNES — **50%**

HOOKABILITY INSTANT ADDICTION BECOMES FLAT ALL TOO QUICKLY — **49%**

LASTABILITY REPETITIVE IS IT'S MIDDLE NAME — **46%**

FORCE FACTOR 46%

THE ADDAMS FAMILY



● Hit Squad, £3.99 Cassette

America's favourite sixties family, the oddball Addams', made the transition to the big screen a couple of years back. MILES 'FESTER(ING)' GUTTERY tries to avoid using words like kooky, spooky, etc. Sadly, he fails.

What a disaster! The Addams family are to be evicted from their ancestral mansion by money-grabbing lawyers. In a heroic demonstration of fighting spirit, the kooky ones have all gone into hiding in and around the house. All, except Gomez.

To beat the eviction order he's gotta round up his yellow-bellied relations and present a model picture of family unity to the authorities. 'Surely it's not that simple' I hear you cry, and by thunder it isn't. You see the Addams abode is alive with nasty creatures, devious traps and perilous spikes pitting pervious problems for our paternal protagonist. Armed with two running speeds and an arsenal of daring leaps, the sharp-suited Spaniard needs his wits about him to avoid getting pickled, pulped or perforated by the evil denizens lurking within his home.

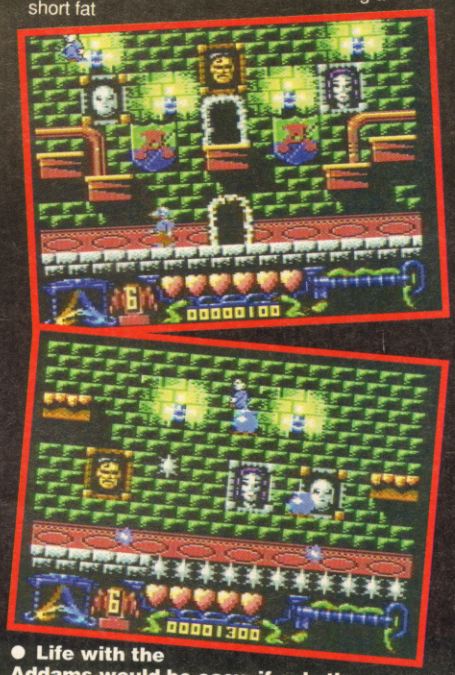
Some nasties can be jumped on, either killing or temporarily disabling them, although many are invulnerable. In such situations Gomez's only hope is to dodge them.

The Mansion contains many doors, most of which are locked at first. In order for Gomez to access the murky depths of his home, colour-coded keys must be located. Careful exploration, inside and out, is the only way our hero will find all the findables, open all the openables, and ultimately reunite his family. To add to his troubles, the various characters are a less than trusting bunch and, when found, set Gomez a task to prove he's not an impostor. This takes you into a sub-game where the Brylcreemed buccaneer must survive for one minute in particularly dangerous torture chamber.

Grizzly Addams

Despite not having seen the film, I can't imagine the game follows it all that closely. Thoughts of sitting in a cinema for two hours watching a short fat man leaping over beach balls and repeatedly getting skewered by hidden spikes hardly fills me with excitement, but that's pretty much the game in it's entirety. Graphics are quite nice throughout but gameplay is hopelessly frustrating. Most jumps require ridiculous pin-point accuracy and many end in tragedy time and time again. Chez Addams is a big place indeed, spanning a massive 240 screens, but Gomez's six lives seem very meagre considering the infuriating difficulty level. This, compounded by the fact nasties are rejuvenated once you've left a screen results in a lack of enjoyment, frustration, swearing and violent hurling of joysticks. To top things off perfectly, a horrendous multiload means you re-load the entire game upon dying — a case of too few continues spoiling the already ropey broth.

Adding a few tangents to the action would have improved things. As it is, the repetitive, mind-bendingly tricky play simply fails to inspire anything other than burbling rumbles in the stomach. These slowly grow until loud crashes indicate advanced states of nausea have been reached. It's then the unsuspecting player retires to a padded room to suck ping-pong balls and ponder the meaning of an existence where such a tortuous game is played for pleasure.



● Life with the Addams would be easy, if only the lightbulbs weren't so difficult to change.

CHRIS!

● If a company are going to lash out on a film license, you'd expect the plot to be slightly familiar to the silver-screen version, but as well as being so very much like billions of other platform games, *The Addams Family* has nothing in common with it's movie counterpart. Finding the family members is literally impossible because of the relentless obstacles that need avoiding. Every screen is filled with barely-feasible feats that need at least ten attempts to get past. However, the graphics are exquisite, with detailed backgrounds and flowing animation — if only they could be coupled with faultless gameplay...

Every element is just so blatantly old; where are the days of new ideas and innovation? It's far too easy to revamp an age-old formula and just patch up the seams with colour graphics.

Well it doesn't fool a tyrannical cynic like me, and here's the mark to confirm it. **47%**

MILES! 49%

GALE WARNING

■ PRESENTATION ■ NO INTRO. A KILLJOY OF A MULTILOAD	58%
■ GRAPHICS ■ OK RENDITION OF THE THEME, AWFUL IN-GAME SQUELCHES	26%
■ SOUND ■ COLOURFUL, CLEAR, AND WELL DEFINED THROUGHOUT	80%
■ HOOKABILITY ■ FAR TOO TRICKY FOR ITS OWN GOOD	35%
■ LASTABILITY ■ ITS BIG, BIG, BIG, IF YOUR WILLING TO STICK AT IT	85%

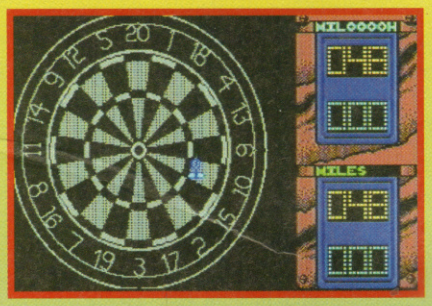
FORCE FACTOR 48%

SPORT

● Zeppelin, 10.99 Cassette, £14.99 Disk

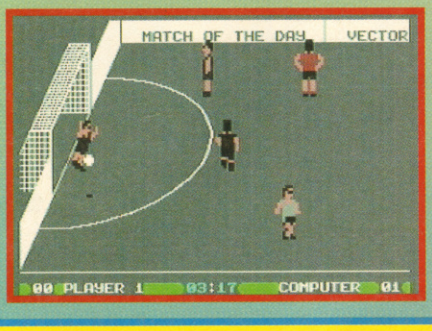
Bunch of fives, Five-Star, Famous Five; many a phrase has been coined with this particular number. JAMES 'LEND US A FIVER' PRICE follows the trend...

People often think physical education in schools is 'for the good of the pupils'. In actuality, I've always considered it an hour or so's worth of council-sponsored terrorism. Standing with sweaty armpits in a washed-out exercise kit lacks style; also, it's usually in the altogether unfashionable setting of a grubby gymnasium or tatty playing field littered with various animal droppings. Even worse, is that your bigger peers often take it upon themselves to foul, injure and occasionally mutilate your frail person, and the subsequent showers can be fraught during the onset of puberty. Strangely, some people enjoy participating in this curious self-abuse; but if you prefer computer games, perhaps Zeppelin's *Sports* compilation can help you work off a few pounds.



Here's a promising start in the form of *Jocky Wilson's Compendium of Darts*. Essentially a darts simulation (whatever that may be), it's a fairly innovative mix of joystick skill and moderately enjoyable sub-games (hence the 'compendium' in the title). In-game control is a simple case of steadying your swaying on-screen hand, with a quick jab of the fire button sending your dart flying towards the board. This may sound strange, but it works well in practice — the two-player mode also makes Jocky a fair multi-player game for your money.

Continuing with the 'pub' theme (and making my intro seem less and less appropriate) is the excellent *American 3D Pool*. Played against the computer or a friend, the table is viewed from above during the shot set-up, and from a 3D angle during the actual move. Also, there's the option to play billiards instead, and the addition of



CHRIS!

● Those great pub games may be a dying breed but darts and pool make first-class '64 conversions. *Jocky Wilson's Compendium* and *American 3D Pool* display this perfectly, and are by far the best in this above-average bundle. Thanks to the skill level required, both have masses of playability — it's not just a matter of blindly pressing fire and hoping for results, as both brain and reflexes need to be finely chiseled for success. That said, the remaining three do offer some entertainment but are very similar in structure — particularly, *5-A-Side Football* and *International Ice Hockey*. Apart from obvious graphical changes, the gameplay is very samey. The big question (apart from 'why are we here?') is value for money — or to be more specific, if there is any. Well I reckon it's worth the asking price, because none of the five are as bad as to be avoided. Hey, with the best two having a definite pub theme, you can't go wrong!

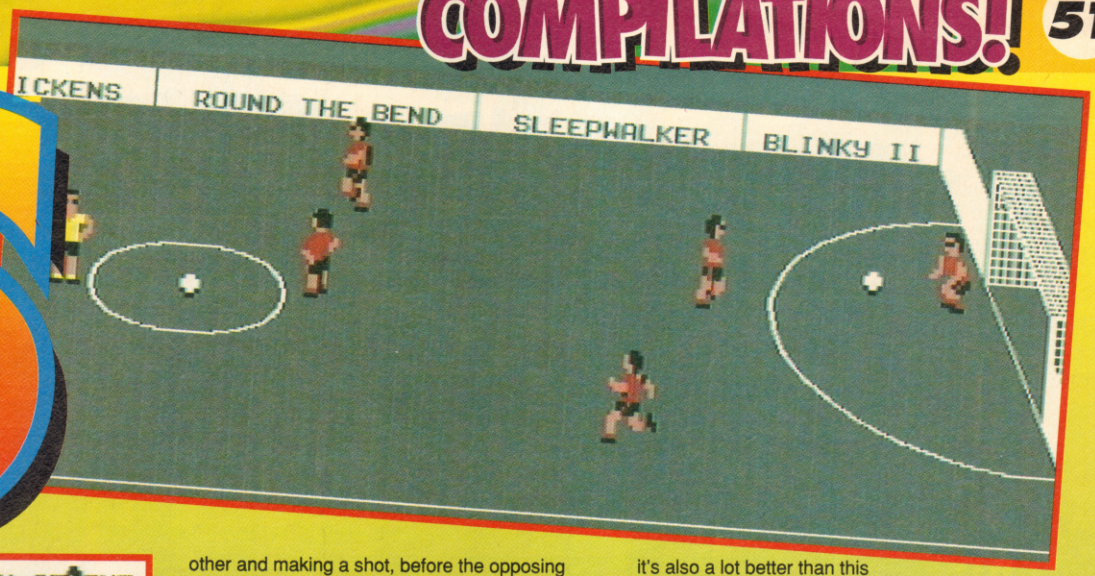
78%

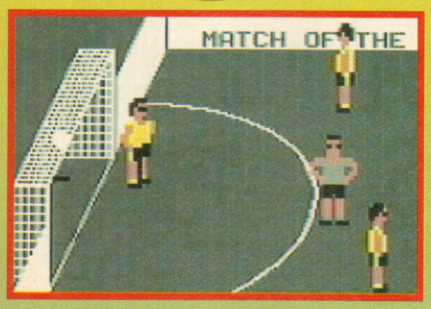
80%

JOCKY WILSON'S DARTS

82%

INTERNATIONAL 3D POOL





spin and power meters makes the action more skill-orientated than other games of this genre. Graphical touches also help lift it above it's competitors; sadly, there's a limited amount of balls during the Pool game (only three of each colour and the black) but this isn't too much of a problem.

Unfortunately, the quality begins to take a nose-dive with the unremarkable *International Five-a-Side*. It's by far the worst this collection has to offer, and it's horribly unrewarding gameplay (even during it's two-player mode) offers little deserving brownie points. For a start, switching between players is nigh-on impossible; when you *do* manage, it's odds on that the opponent you're trying to catch is over the green hills and far away. The trauma is increased when you realise every player moves at the same speed, regardless as to whether they're running with the ball or not. This means the gameplay's a simple task of running from one end of the pitch to the other and making a shot, before the opposing team do exactly the same. Oh, and shots seem to only go in from a certain diagonal; try anything else, and you'll fail dismally. Where's the skill in that?

On a (thankfully) more tuneful note, there's *International Ice Hockey*. Perhaps it's most noteworthy aspect is it's awfully similar to *International Five-a-Side*, and yet isn't quite so bad. Once you've got the hang of your player's inertia, it's actually a fun little game to waste some time with. Unfortunately, as with it's sister game, design flaws are all too apparent. The ice-hockey angle isn't fully exploited and the odd amusing touches begin to lose their appeal after a while, but you'll not feel *too* bad about playing it...

Finally, *Fantastic Soccer* isn't exactly what it's namesake suggests; back in the real world it's more of a poor-man's *Microprose Soccer*. Still, the limited overhead view and shoddy graphics do have a certain charm — it's also a lot better than this compilation's other football offering. With a handful of teams to choose from, it's with the two-player mode that *Soccer* comes into it's own. Beating a friend is an enjoyable moment; right Chris?

Sports is an above-average compilation. If you don't have any of the titles included, at £2.19 a game on tape and £2.99 on disk, it's a bit of a bargain. Try it and see.

JAMES! 78%

FORCE FACTOR 78%

42%

INTERNATIONAL FIVE-A-SIDE

62%

INTERNATIONAL ICE-HOCKEY

65%

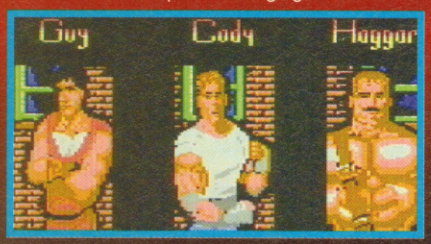
FANTASTIC SOCCER

FINAL FIGHT

● Kixx, £3.99 Cassette

CHRIS 'FRUSTRATED' HAYWARD is desperately trying to talk to his dream babe at the moment. Amazingly enough, after plucking up the courage to ask for a date, he made an awful mistake and ended up in a restaurant with *Final Fight* instead...

When Mike Haggar was elected as Mayor of Metro City, he expected an easy life — a few meetings, cups of coffee, weekly holidays etc. So when a gang of unscrupulous villains kidnapped his daughter, he was most put out. 'The Mad Gear Gang' were renowned for their horrific crimes, and the more Mike wondered about his daughter's safety, the more he wanted to punch some mouths. Then, by sheer coincidence, Mike remembered one small insignificant event — he used to be a champion street fighter! Okay, so he'd aged over the last fifty years and sprouted an enormous beer-gut along with an inherited fungus-like disease, but he was still fast with his hands. Alright, for the record, he couldn't even tie his shoelaces in less than an hour, but Mike knew that he could beat the Mad Gears and rescue his beloved child. In his position, he couldn't possibly fail! He knew the chief of police, military personnel, Judith Charmers; hell, he'd even seen the President! (on TV that is, but he wasn't letting on). It was here that Mr Haggar made a critical error. Instead of consulting these important, power-laden people, he decided to call up a mate to go give the Mad Gear a good kicking. So, without even leaving a note for the milkman, Haggar and his buddy set off through six levels of violence and corruption to find his lickle girl.



● The lads — Guy, Cody and Haggar. Leaner, meaner, window cleaners!

Final plight

Right, that's the plot over with, let's get on with the slating that this particularly dire game deserves. *Final Fight*'s fancy introduction hides a dark side, and this nightmare vision comes to life in a writhing cake of worms and cucumber (bit of imaginative wording there) — the terrible playability.

After selecting a single or two-player game and choosing one of three fighters (Mike, Cody or Guy) the first location is visited — and what a tarnished event it is. Beat-'em-ups are fun because they're so easy to get into, *Final Fight* is plain easy; so much so, you'll probably finish it first time. The moves available are shallow and unresponsive, the animation appalling. The sprites have some truly absurd limbs — hips bend at 90°, legs fold back on themselves — disgraceful! Completing each section is an intensifying pain as endless waves of nonchalant baddies wander on to get repeatedly knocked down by a stupid looking move. The two player mode hardly saves it from being utterly insipid, as many characters look so similar, it's easy to end up flattening your mate! It takes several seconds for a hit to register; a multitude of kicks don't seem to connect at all, and yet the receiver flies backward with torso oddly misshapen.

Sadly, *Final Fight* is a game with a serious lack of redeeming features, and my final mark reflects this. Your money will be better spent else-where.

CHRIS! 12%

MILES!

● Lord have mercy if this isn't one of the most unplayable games we've seen in a while. The graphics are utterly terrible from beginning to end, and with playability seemingly absent from the programmers itinerary the result is quite painful to behold. Having looked high and low through this sad game, I'm unable to point out a single aspect I've enjoyed. It's arcade parent relied on huge sprites and thumping FX — in contrast, the C64 conversion combines stomach-churning squelches with the most unresponsive controls I've ever come across, leaving a game that's, frankly, a nightmare to play.

13%

GALE WARNING

■ PRESENTATION ■ GLOSSY, SCENE-SETTING INTRO	78%
■ GRAPHICS ■ BANAL, DISCOLOURED SPRITES	10%
■ SOUND ■ SCRATCHY, LIFELESS FX	9%
■ HOOKABILITY ■ YOU SOON RECOGNISE THE DISASTER AT HAND	11%
■ LASTABILITY ■ SO EASY AND SO VERY, VERY DULL	8%

FORCE FACTOR 13%

FIST FIGHTER

● Zeppelin, £3.99 Cassette

Somebody once said the pen is mightier than the sword. 'Yes, but only if you stab them in the eye with it, then run away' said popular philosopher JAMES 'YELLOW-BELLY' PRICE, waving his Biro menacingly...

To my mind, the best beat-'em-up the C64 has ever produced is the utterly splendiferous *IK+*. More recent efforts (such as the disappointing *Streetfighter 2*) have neither the charm, graphical excellence or playability — they even lack the pounding, oriental soundtrack (or equivalent).

Fist Fighter (according to the manual) is the only game to include 'Twelve Standard Combat Moves', 'Five Professional Fist Fighters', 'Three Fight Locations' and a partridge in a pear tree. Oops, that one slipped in but you get the point, don't you? It goes on for a while, and resembles a Conservative Party manifesto in terms of hot air content. I suggest that the person responsible for this collection of nasty stuff be taken outside and beaten around the head with a mouldy dishcloth. It's a blatant attempt to make a metaphorical silk purse out of a sow's ear — believe me, *Fist Fighter* is awful.

A fist full of dollops

There's certainly enough options to help you select the misery; changing skill levels and choosing one of three possible locations are just two of the (quietly counts) six options on offer. The presentation is quite natty too, with a respectable title screen and interesting pre-match introduction stuff.

All I can say about the game is 'oh dear'. It's obviously trying to cash in on the beat-'em-up frenzy following the success of *Streetfighter 2*, although I can confidently say it's five times as bad. For a start, the controls are slow and unresponsive (not to mention badly laid out) but this doesn't become a problem too often, as once you've knocked down your opponent you return to your respective side of screen. As a direct result of this, most of the moves are essentially redundant — though that's probably for the best, having viewed the animation.

Obviously, each fighter has their own individual special move. From a skittle roll to a whirlwind kick (incidentally, it's just like Ryu's in *SF2*) they're every bit as insipid as the normal moves, only they deplete more energy. The only aspect of the game that's even remotely praiseworthy is the end-of-match insults — and they're bad too.

While reviewing *Fist Fighter*, looks of disgust and contemptuous remarks flew toward my general area of the office. Confused, I tried to think what I could've done wrong. Had I reversed a car over Miles' cat? Had I reversed a cat over Miles' car? Had Chris found out about the rabbit poo in his whipped cream? None of these where applicable, of course, and I was most definitely pleased. But *Fist Fighter* has no (and will never have any) friends around here, no siree...

JAMES! 18%

CHRIS!

● It had to happen. *Street Fighter 2*'s popularity has given rise to a seriously duff game. It's a crying shame that products are lobbed on the bandwagon without an ounce of substance between them, and *Fist Fighter*'s cash-in attempt is a sad effort that chokes on it's own vomit. Perhaps the faults lie in the characters, or lack of them. With only five fighters to select and the only difference between these being one special move the prospects of a daunting challenge hardly spring to mind. It's laughable that a tournament hasn't even been included, so you can forget any special fighters to meet at the end as in *Street Fighter 2*. Graphics are brown, bland and banal and game play is just as stained. This is one piece of software to turn a blind eye to — think smart and avoid.

30%

● Often referred to in the trade as 'The Double Whammy' manoeuvre, readers are reminded not to try this at home!

GALE WARNING

■ PRESENTATION ■ BEST PART OF THE GAME GRAPHICS — 74%

■ GRAPHICS ■ POOR MOVES, TERRIBLE BACKGROUNDS — 44%

■ SOUND ■ IT'S NEVER GONNA BE NUMBER ONE — 45%

■ HOOKABILITY ■ OFF PUTTING FROM THE FIRST ROUND — 12%

■ LASTABILITY ■ AN IMITATION OF THE SOUREST SORT — 12%

FORCE FACTOR 24%

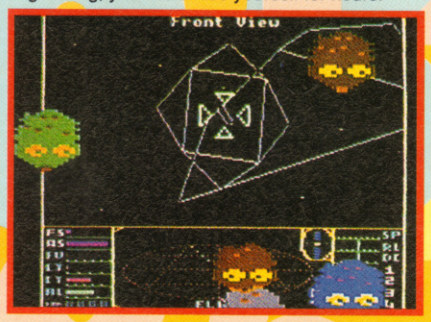
BACK TO TH

Consoles may have the considerable might of trend holding their metaphorical hands at the moment, but one thing they can't beat is the phenomenal history of the C64. There's a veritable plethora of classic games from days gone by; bearing this in mind, we decided a considerably large feature was in order. Starting with the distant year of 1985 (and advancing to 1986 and beyond in subsequent issues) I (James) will be telling you about some of the best C64 software and memorable events that came to light throughout the ages. Also, you'll find information on whether the games discussed can still be obtained, the sort of mark they received in their time and how they rate in these enlightened days. Researching this feature wasn't as easy as I'd initially imagined; for a start, our software collection and other archives only go back as far as June 1985. I didn't want to begin with 1986, as there're so many classic titles worthy of a mention before that date, I'd be a fool to disregard them. So, this month I'll be detailing just over half a year, but rest assured that later instalments will be (more or less) complete round-ups.

1985

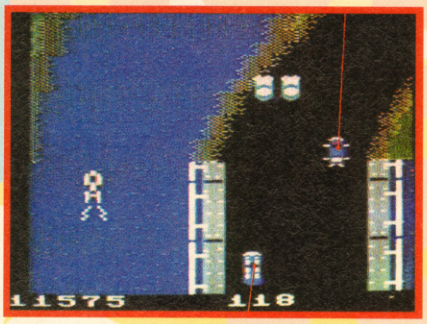
In the beginning...

The Gulf War was a mere gleam in the eye of an up-and-coming tyrant; Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister (being a tyrant already) and I was aged a particularly youthful eleven. The C64 market was beginning to boom; software houses and programmers alike realised it's potential, and were grasping the opportunities it offered. **Firebird** certainly did with their conversion of the classic BBC Micro game, *Elite*. It was a space trading and exploration affair, with wireframe graphics, innovative control method and mind-bending addictivness. Essentially, it required you to fly between planets, purchasing and selling objects with a view to making huge profits. Initially, this was pretty much impossible, but after a few successful trades you could begin to deal in more lucrative lines. This is where the game really began to unfold; you'd ask yourself 'do I risk a lot by selling slaves (and make a killing along the way) or play safe by dealing in computers?'. Also, during flight sequences, you'd find yourself attacked by murderous space pirates. Dispatching these resulted in a moderate bounty being awarded — in fact, you could decide to leave trading behind and make a living this way! The freedom available was out of this world, and with hundreds of planets to visit and ship add-ons to improve your standing... it was so engrossing, you could lose yourself for hours.



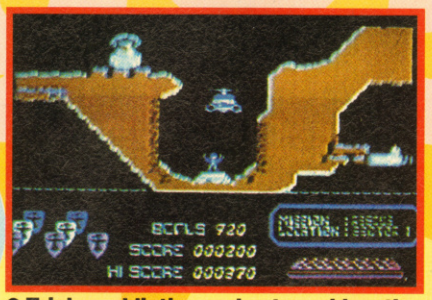
Many people questioned the competence of the conversion; believe me when I say that despite a slight reduction in speed, it was every bit as good as the original and a true classic.

US Gold's *Spy Hunter* has been duplicated incessantly by games developers for many years now, and being 'father' to a genre, set a good example. The vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up action was vehicle-related, with a mixture of car and speedboat sections both requiring a steady joystick hand. Novelty presented it's head in the form of four power-ups, used to dispatch various



assailants, including a particularly nasty helicopter. Not everything in your path was out for blood though — the game actively encouraged thoughtful play by subtracting points for every innocent civilian killed. Not that it stopped people...

Elite got more than just an 88% rating for their *Airwolf* game (based loosely on the series of the same name) — the TV coverage it received on Central News almost guaranteed them a tidy profit. The game itself was a difficult, multidirectional-scrolling shoot-and-save-'em-up (phew!). The challenge it offered was rather admirable; however, you needed the patience of a saint to be a successful pilot. Nevertheless, it was far better than it's weak Spectrum counterpart, and the percentages awarded reflected this.



● **Tricky, addictive and yet as old as the hills — *Airwolf*'s certainly worth a look.**

Strange Happenings...

A news item appeared in ZZAP! 64, Issue One. It read as follows...

'I was intrigued by the scenario in the new **Commodore** game, *Jack Attack*, reviewed in this issue. It features a guy called Jack going around getting pleasure out of squashing peoples heads. That wouldn't be by any chance a reference to big tough Jack Tramiel, the former **Commodore** boss who deserted them for **Atari**, would it...? You naughty boys.'

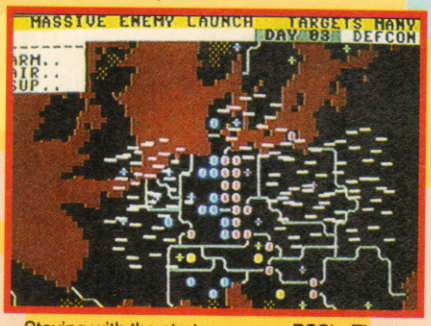
Those were the days, eh?

THE FEATURE

So what's the plan?

Denton Designs spoiled the C64-owning fraternity with their superlative strategy game, *Shadowfire* (released by **Beyond**). Although it's been surpassed by Julian Gollop's more recent *Laser Squad* and *Lords of Chaos*, it still ranks as one of the best thought-provoking games every written.

Taking your six characters (known as Enigma Team) in hand, you had to storm a highly-defended complex with a view to capturing the evil General Zoff. Control was accessed through an easy-to-use icon system — undoubtedly one of the best ever offered on the '64 — and although initially bewildering, it worked like a dream.



Staying with the strategy genre, **PSS**'s *Theatre Europe* was widely regarded as the best wargame released at the time. Perhaps the games reviewers liked the idea of starting nuclear wars; this, among other things, was an option during play. Comprehensive it was, instantly accessible — no way. For those willing to take the time, *Theatre* was as good as the year could offer; it also compares favourably to offerings during subsequent years…

Out of several race games *Pole Position* and *Pitstop 2* came out on top. Viewed from behind, you'd have a limited amount of time to drive your car like a maniac and beat other competitors. *Pitstop 2* was universally accepted as the better of the two; it's split-screen racing action was an innovation for the time, and was greeted with open-arms and twitching joystick hands. *Pole Position* was a conversion of the arcade classic — although unfortunately, it started to age when finally released.

● Beer, beer, we want more beer. All the lads are cheering, get the... rounds in?

Pjamarama spawned a sequel in the form of *Everyone's a Wally*. This second game in the Wally Week trilogy (there were actually four of them in the end) involved wandering around a hazard-filled playing area, solving puzzles and avoiding assorted nasties. However, certain tasks could only be completed by switching between four available characters.

It's mixture of platform and arcade adventure made *Everyone's* an enjoyable game to play. Even though it failed to receive rave reviews, it still attracted a cult following and was an admirable effort by it's publisher, **Microgen**.

International Basketball by **Commodore** bounced it's way onto the C64 scene, much to the delight of sports fans at the time. Although basically a revamp of their equally-adorable *International Soccer*, it scored highly with reviewers, receiving a typical 92% for it's excellence. Likewise, **Imagine**'s *World Series Baseball* was widely regarded as one hell of a rendition of the predominantly American sport. As well as being enjoyable to play, it had a lot to offer in terms of presentation and general glitz. It was also a game I wasted a good few weeks on — and to think I could have been out in the sun playing the real thing. Would that have been as much fun though? I doubt it…

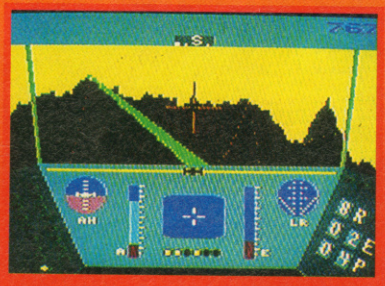
UK Gold's classic *Dropzone* made a phenomenal impression upon the industry at the time. Although it borrowed heavily from the likes of *Defender*, it was so slick in it's execution and playable to such extremes that it received a mind-melting typical percentage of 95. Not many shoot-'em-ups can profess to have received that high a mark; *Dropzone* firmly established itself above all others.

Down at Fractal Rock...?

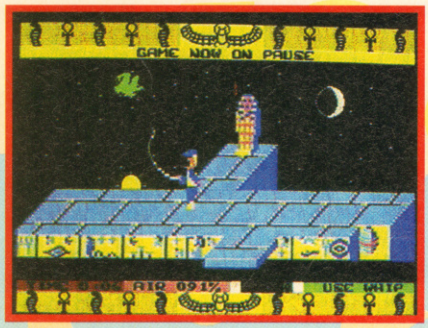
Rescue on Fractalus is worth a mention simply because of it's graphics — they were some of the first on the C64 (and some of the last!) to be generated by using 'fractals'. I've no doubt you programmers out there will know what they are, but I'll risk life and limb by trying to (roughly) explain.

Fractals are everywhere. Every cell, every living or dead organism, is (when reduced to their most simplistic level) able to be explained (and reconstructed) by numbers. These numbers can be mimicked using a computer to create random, 'realistic' images. Obviously, the C64 can't cope with the mathematics that the super-powerful PC's can, and so the end result is usually a little more simplistic (as with *Rescue*). Anyway, I've read a feature on it before now, so I know what I mean — they had pictures of ferns and the like that had been generated on-screen using fractals. So, if I'm wrong, blame that article (whatever it was).

As for *Rescue* — it was OK for it's time, but appears limited nowadays. Receiving a typical 91%, I'd recommend it for curio value, but little else.

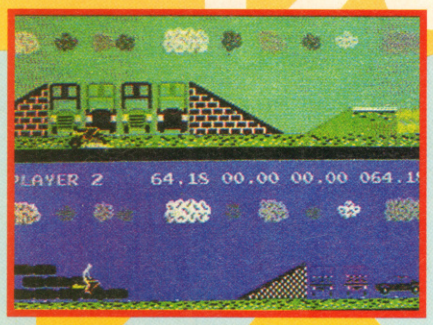


● No matter how hard we tried, we couldn't smash the TV screen. Oh well...



The ultimate game?

Ultimate where too godly by half on the Spectrum. On the C64, they seemed to be equally holy with the release of the fantastic *Entombed*. An arcade adventure with a strange viewpoint, it kept people from their sleep, food and pet-feeding activities for days on end. Unfortunately, two of **Ultimate**'s other games (released through **Firebird**) failed to make a similar impression. *Sabre Wulf* and *Underwurlde* were both conversions of Spectrum classics; sadly, by the time they arrived on the C64, gaming standards had improved. Again, both being arcade adventures, they found themselves banished into the pit of mediocrity by arriving too late and offering too little. The general opinion at the time was that **Ultimate** should have given them a 'face-lift' — which is pretty much as **First Star/Monolith** did with the sequel to *Boulderdash*. Take one of the most original and addictive pieces of software ever, create a series of new levels and what do you get? *Rockford's Riot* was just as much fun as it's predecessor — however, you can fool some people some of the time, but you can't just (essentially) re-release a game without it being noticed. Receiving a typical 82%, it was commented upon that different levels don't necessarily make a game a sequel — and rightly so!



● **Cheap, playable and an incredible bargain — Kikstart 2 had it all to offer. Still to this day it raises a cheer.**

Kikstart came as a bit of a surprise from budget house **Mastertronic**. As a horizontally-scrolling race game, it scored few points for originality, but as a split-screen, two-player bike-romp it amassed much acclaim for innovation. With several tracks to negotiate, it was as simple to play as you could hope for — and for a mere £1.99, was one of the better bargains 1985 had to offer.

Way of the Exploding Fist is (arguably) the best C64 beat-'em-up ever, bar the more recent *IK+*. It's publisher (**Melbourne House**) gave the public excellent animation, screaming sound and — most importantly — fantastic fighting gameplay. In two-player mode *Fist* could really be enjoyed to it's full, and the sixteen moves could be utilised with maximum, bone-crunching effect. It's solo mode was by no means easy or badly implemented; far from it. It's just this sort of game is much more enjoyable played against a friend, and *Fist* happily catered for this.

The Electronic Pencil Company (famous for *Zoids*, among others) took the icon-driven adventure approach and converted Fredrick Forsyth's *The Fourth Protocol* to the Commodore 64. The result was one of the best thought-orientated games available; still to this day, it can't fail to impress. Relating the game content would require more space than I care to give — suffice to say it's a classic piece of software that compares favourably with recent efforts.

Wagglemania

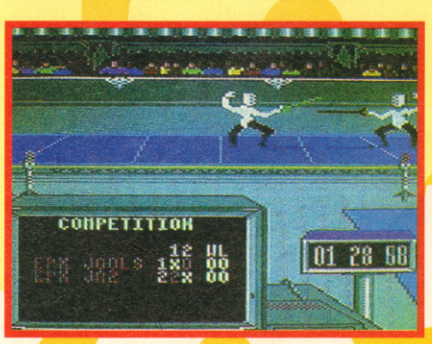
However, while **Imagine**'s *Hyper Sports* is one of the best sports-related games ever released, the genre is basically as limited as ever. Smashing the living daylights out of your joystick was fun for a while, but in all too short a time you began to think 'why?'. However, it's frenetic gameplay wasn't all that bad, although, like others of it's type, it's a member of an over-rated game-style.

Summer Games from **Epyx** was in a similar mould. Luckily, the programmers tried to stay away from the usual frantic joystick movement approach, favouring a more thoughtful, skilful method. This worked fairly well; a typical mark of the time was 97%, although it's aged sufficiently

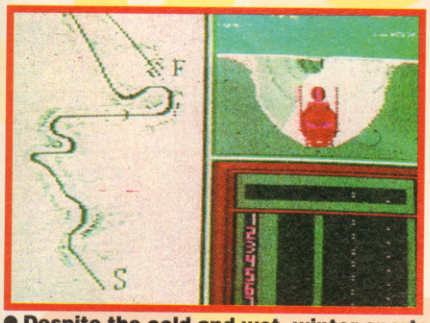
On the beach.

US Gold's *Beach Head 2* was, as well as being an advance over it's predecessor, a darn fine game. Built up of four different sub-sections, it was different in the way that you could control either the good guys or the bad guys! This added considerable lastability to it's already strong playability base — although undoubtedly, it's strongest point was that two players could take either side, and fight until the bitter end.Don't underestimate it after seeing the screenshots though — it moves a great deal better than it looks here...

● **It looks a little basic as a screensho t, but *Beach Head 2* plays really well.**

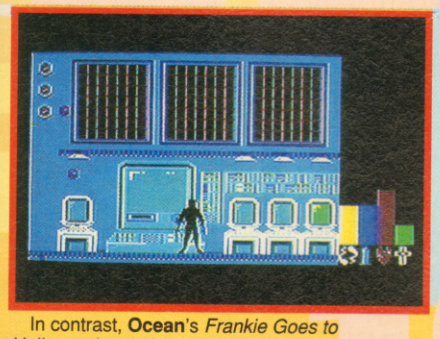


to loose a few points. Also, the cassette multiload was a real hindrance — I'd go as far as to say you often spent more time loading than you did playing the assorted events. Luckily, the variation between levels made for enjoyable action (for disk owners, at least) but personally, I prefered it's sequel, *Winter Games*.



● Despite the cold and wet, winter sports are supposedly fun. I don't think so...

Again, this was a game that avoided the traditional, joystick-punishing control method and opted for a favourable system of skill and timing. The loading problems were (yet again) all-too apparent, but the levels were of such a high quality that you couldn't feel *too* bad about time wasted.

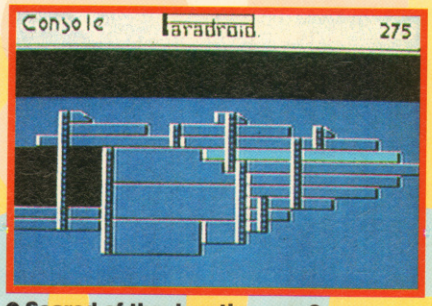


In contrast, **Ocean**'s *Frankie Goes to Hollywood* was almost faultless. Everything most people would want from a computer game was present in it's fantastically-coded gameplay. With enjoyable shoot-'em-up and puzzle sub-games, coupled with a compulsive arcade adventure... forget the licence with the controversial band, as it had little to do with the actual game. What I suggest you do is go out and find a copy, You won't regret it.

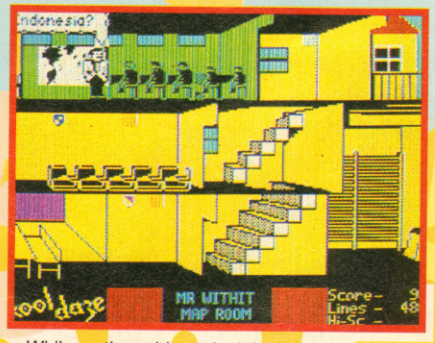
Finders Keepers was, like *Kikstart 2*, a £1.99 game that presented one hell of a bargain. What it lacked in, say, graphic and sonic appeal was more than made up for by the addictivity of the arcade-adventuring. Disregarding the plot is all too easy; like many products of the time, it's distinct lack of serviceable plot is almost cringeworthy. Still, helping the Magic Knight (as your hero was known) in his quest through mazes and over platforms was a quality affair that more than compensated for any shortcomings.

Monty on the Run was Peter Harrap's second mole-related game, and out of the four released, many felt this the best of the lot. Another arcade adventure, this barraged the player with a brilliant Rob Hubbard soundtrack and addictive gameplay. Original touches included a section where you were required to drive a Sinclair C5 (remember them?) and Monty's athletic leap (supposedly learnt in the prison gymnasium, during his detainment at Her Majesty's Pleasure).

If you're a fan of social climbing, and have always wanted to elevate yourself to the dizzy heights of being an all-round wonderful person (whatever that may be) then *Paradroid* is a game that might interest you. After months of coverage in magazines such as ZZAP! 64, Andrew Braybrook's classic finally made it's way onto the C64 market in it's finished form, courtesy of **Hewson Consultants**. Originality was one of it's strongest points; taking control of a lowly robot, you had to explore various levels and engage other robots in combat. However, rather than blasting the living daylights out of them, you could choose to fight a 'grappling' battle, with use of an enjoyable sub-game. If you managed to beat your opponent, you could cannibalise their bodies for useful, unbroken equipment, thus increasing your power and abilities. The assorted levels of robot meant that diving straight in for the big boys meant certain death; with a little tact and diplomacy though, it was possible to become (almost) omnipotent and clear the levels of the treacherous droids.



● Scared of the daunting map? Trembling at the level layout? Don't get paranoid, just play Paradroid!



While on the subject of originality, **Microsphere**'s *Skooldaze* was a particularly novel approach to the phenomenon known as the computer game. To categorise it would to be call it a school simulation — and I don't think that's fair. It did require you to attend lessons, lunchtimes and playtimes, but was so much fun because of novel interaction between pupils and teachers and it's crisp, colourful two-dimensional graphics. It was much better than the real thing as well — for a start, you didn't have lousy Home Economics teachers grunting monosyllabic cooking suggestions. What a great game.

● Skooldaze is remarkably similar to Grange Hill. Blackboard scribbles, bangers and mash, but where's Gripper Stebson?

Holding back the years of Zzap!

1985 wasn't just a year of quality software. It was during this oh-so-prolific era of the C64 that a new face joined the computer magazine scene — ZZAP! 64. COMMODORE FORCE's predecessor made it's way onto the newsstand in the middle of the year, and no-one's been able to remove it so far in either guise — other than the loyal readers who take it to the counter and spend their hard-earned cash on it. Here at COMMODORE FORCE, we've tried to maintain the high standards that it set, and even go beyond and above. Obviously we're doing something right, because our circulation figures say so. Thank you, (to rapturous applause) no really, I couldn't possibly make a speech, you're so kind...

So, having read all that, you're probably wondering how you could get your hands on these games. Sadly, I'd say most (if not all) of the games included in this issue's instalment have been deleted for many a year. However, have a quick look around at market stalls and car boot sales — you never know, you might just find that elusive original...

THE LIST!

To show you just how well the classics of yester-year fare against recent efforts, where to obtain them (if possible) as well as a few choice comments, we constructed this table. Basically, it goes as follows:
Game Name — Publisher — Typical Mark of it's time — Force Factor (how we'd rate it these days) — Availability. For Availability, we've given an estimate of 'purchasability' (new word there) out of ten, with seven to ten being available in the shops and three to six being obtainable through mail order, the occasional store and car boot sales.
Finally, one to three is for those really hard-to-find classics.
We hope you find it interesting — otherwise, we'll send Chris around to tell you about his love life. Mills and Boon are, in comparison, a reet riveting read...

Don't consider this as an end. This is just a fiery punctuation, a burning semi-colon in the history of the C64. For the next paragraph, tune into next months issue of COMMODORE FORCE. See you there...

GAME	PUBLISHER	TYPICAL MARK	FORCE FACTOR	AVAIL-ABILITY
Elite What more can I say? It's a classic no-one should be without.	Firebird	95%	95%	4/10
Spy Hunter The (sort of) father of it's genre, and still good by todays standards.	US Gold	87%	80%	3/10
Pole Position Getting on a bit now, but still worth the odd race or two.	US Gold	70%	55%	2/10
Airwolf Difficult but ultimately rewarding.	Elite	88%	70%	3/10
Shadowfire One of the best strategy games ever. A true classic.	Beyond	91%	90%	1/10
Theatre Europe Not instantly accessible, but certainly comprehensive war sim.	PSS	94%	76%	1/10
Pitstop 2 Beaten by *Lotus Turbo Esprit* from Gremlin — worth a look, though.	Epyx	89%	75%	2/10
Everyone's a Wally Ageing but fun platform/arcade adventure game.	Microgen	82%	76%	1/10
International Basketball Great bouncing-ball sports action — but you'll be lucky to find it...	Commodore	92%	79%	1/10
World Series Baseball One of the best baseball games available.	Imagine	87%	81%	1/10
Dropzone Classic blasting action.	UK Gold	95%	87%	1/10
Entombed Great arcade adventure from the depths of time.	Ultimate	93%	85%	1/10
Rockford's Riot Timeless arcade romp. A little similar to it's predecessor, though...	First Star /Monolith	82%	82%	1/10
Kikstart One of the best original budget games ever. Even better on two-player.	Master-tronic	90%	86%	1/10
Beach Head 2 Manic on two-player, not so hot on one. Worth a look.	US Gold	90%	83%	2/10
Way... Exploding Fist Great but violent beat-'em-up. Break some bones in style.	Melbourne House	93%	89%	3/10
The Fourth Protocol Superlative strategy/adventure.	Hutchinson	95%	90%	1/10
Hyper Sports Enjoyable, but limited sports game. It hurts your joystick too.	Imagine	90%	75%	2/10
Summer Games A front-runner of the sports genre. The Equestrian section is magic.	Epyx	97%	83%	5/10
Frankie... Hollywood This game is mad, brilliant, original... and pretty much unavailable.	Ocean	97%	95%	1/10
Rescue on Fractalus Of curio value alone, if just to see what I was rambling on about...	Activision	91%	69%	1/10
Monty on the Run Platform frolics and amazingly amazing aurals. Wow.	Gremlin Graphics	90%	85%	1/10
Winter Games One of my favourite sporty games. There's lots of snow in it too.	Epyx	94%	87%	5/10
Paradroid One of the best C64 games ever. Wow, wow and wow some more.	Hewson	97%	96%	1/10
Skooldaze Underrated at it's time — irresistible fun, unlike it's subject matter...	Micro-sphere	78%	81%	1/10

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PUBLIC SECTOR

MADONNA SEX SLITRO

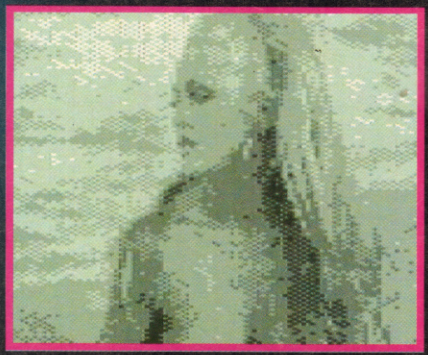
Faces

Yep! The naughty name says it all really. No doubt you'll remember the controversy surrounding the book written by the famous female singer/actress/all round bad girl, MADONNA! The book contains several naughty stories, illustrated by the queen of pop and her friends (it's not that good either… er, apparently — Chris). Some dudes digitised the pictures onto the PC, and they've somehow reached the C64 in the form of a graphical slide show by the Dutch (who else) group, **FACES**. Although the picture quality is rather low (a 5 metre distance is advised by the programmers) you'll just be able to recognise Madonna.

Coding and graphics-wise this has low standards (even lower moral standards) but the DYCP **FACES** logo during the intro is respectable enough, and musically there's a computerised version of 'Under The Bridge' by the Red Hot Chilli Peppers. Hardly fitting, a bit on the slow side, but still an accurate and pleasing conversion.

Maddona Sex Slitro is a funny joke. It's nice to see the C64 included in the hype, but the graphics (what a demo's all about!) are too bad to make it anything special.

THE PD VERDICT! 48%



BEYOND REALITY

Focus

Controversy not only accompanied Madonna's book but went hand-in-hand with *FOCUS*'s last demo. Nobody was best pleased with the offensive text it contained and owing to the bad publicity they've rectified the situation by including hardly any text whatsoever in this follow up.

The intro begins with a weird logo and animated characters zooming in and out, setting the scene for the first section. This features some dot-animation and a tune which whisks you off down memory lane.

With a nice, professional looking loader, you're lead into the second part — Swinging Owl. Well, there *is* an owl, but on my computer it certainly didn't swing! Below the owl "FC 93" signs can be rotated, zoomed and flipped via the joystick — quite awkward and really rather boring.

On to part three — Flincredible. It features two FLI pictures, one from *Robocop* and one from *Darkman*. Personally I think they could have been drawn as normal pictures, *Robocop* for sure. Besides a nice (if repetitive) tune and the swapping between both pictures, this has nothing to offer. The next section looks like it would be old news in a demo some years ago and TDJ, a member of **FOCUS**, told me that this *was* actually made a while back, but was thought too nice to be wasted. The 'plasma' is joystick controlled, and you can make some pretty funny effects with it. A nice touch is the small keyboard below displaying the notes corresponding to the music being played.

The best part is entitled *Housed Heads* featuring two halfs of a head with a woman dancing in the centre. The screen scrolls up, down, left and right; sadly, the woman isn't animated. The music is a rewritten version of 'Deek's Infinity' and even though the original version is better, this is great.

FOCUS' slogan is "Style is never out of Fashion." It couldn't be more appropriate — if only they'd just implement it in their products...

THE PD VERDICT! 72%

FANTASIA 3

Oxyron

What an active bunch of computer freaks the **OXYRON** lot are! I mean, if you look up 'active' in the dictionary, you'll be referred to the word **OXYRON** — that's how active they are! This demo was released just to show that it's possible to improve parts of *Coma Light 8*. They reckon they're the most industrious group around, and you'd have a hard time proving them wrong.

The intro features a house-like tune with a *Fantasia 3* logo being built up then faded out, leaving the screen flashing — very odd indeed. The second part features a plotscroll, built up from 640 dots and updated each frame but, as they admit themselves, these scrollers are boring without a special effect. The effect used here is a line-vektor (with hidden lines) in the lower part of the screen and calculated in real-time. Sadly enough, these do little to save this part from being boring. Techy code, maybe, but no design at all.

What follows isn't much better, the reason being that the demo was rushed out in time for *Coma Light 8* but wasn't good enough to be included (well, that's their excuse). You get to see some transforming pixel-vektors built up from dots, instead of lines or planes. An interesting fact that's worth a mention is that the music was recorded live at a party in Aars/Sweden by Pri of **OXYRON**, and I must admit it's a very good tune! Then comes FLI Fullscreen Once Framed Plasma. Again, it sounds technical and is hard to code, so it's a pity it's not that hot to look at.

All mathematical lovers will enjoy the following display, it's a fractal, and a very fast one at that! You see a big full-screen plasma, and a smaller one in the upper left part of the screen. The only glitch is that the programmer has used his own fractal formula, a simplified version of very complex ones. It works, kinda, and at least the audio support is good.

After a small rasterbar interlude comes the ultimate plot extravaganza — 16,358 plots! (I smell a wet kipper though). It looks amazing (if you like a whole lot of lines scrolling through each other), but as for the rest — 2 scrollers and a logo — it's a bit of a mess. With crazy characters, a very standard logo and music sounding like a conversion from AAA (Awful Audible Attack). To put the dampners on things even more, a completely boring bob-scroller appears, looking very much like a dots-scroller, only with enlarged dots.

Next up is a Disk-filler which is basically a whole lot of rubbish, especially the logo — it's the ugliest I've ever seen! Worst thing is, it's the last part (but maybe that's for the best).

Fantasia 3 is what they call it, some stages were too bad to put in a real commercial demo, only featuring some complex code and the odd tune. Nothing too be proud of.

THE PD VERDICT! 53%

PAST AND PRESENT

And now, it's time for a COMMODORE FORCE exclusive!

Mega Industries

MEGA INDUSTRIES is one seriously good company (although I would say that 'cos I'm the founder and co-founder of it!). We put together a startling C-FORCE PD compilation with products that have competed against demos like *Dutch Breeze* and *Wet Dreams 2*. Somehow we never got to complete it as everyone went off to work on bigger projects, so this is a preview of a compilation to come that will shake the PD scene upside down!

REMI'S FAULT

This was originally at the end of our *Back To The Roots* demo which was never finished either. It gained third place at the **SILICON LTD.** party, just after **BLACKMAIL**'s *Dutch Breeze*. The stage contains an upward scroller — nothing fancy.

S***HOUSE

A weird name for a weird experience. Coded by Ghostrider (like everything else in this collection), it features the worlds first real FMFA. Sinnie came up with a complicated animation, but since we in **MEGA** only give out previews, even that FMFA hasn't been totally used. Two different animations spring up, one with jigsaw-circles (much like in London Beat's video-clip, which we reckon they stole from us!) and some rotating sunbeams, both timed to the fab house-like music by Jereon Tel (in a quadruple speed player, if I'm right!). Point is, those seemingly separate animations aren't actually separate. It's all done in one very complex full-screen animation, of only four frames. Still, it's a worthy part, featuring yet another brilliant design-invention by **MEGA**. You'll be seeing more of this (and better) in future projects!

This is not all of *Past And Present*, but the other five parts aren't really PD-productions but several sub-levels. There's even a sneaky preview **ALTER DEVELOPMENTS**' (yep, the ones producing *Lemmings*) forthcoming *History Of The World*. In addition to this there's even two birthday demos for me. They might be okay to review, but they feature graphics from *Troddlers* and we're not sure whether we've got that assignment yet (by the time you read this, we hopefully will).

DUTCH WINDMILL

Totally made at an earlier **SILICON** party this has a preview of FMFA — Flexible Mathematical F(something) Animations, something our graphicer Sinnie was experimenting with at the time. It consists of a rotating dartboard with a familiar face (to C-FORCE readers that is) and an overlaying scroller. Again, it was never really completed, so don't expect anything special. After saying that though, it's still impressive for something made at a party — even the calculations were executed without the help of a calculator!

A small, but interesting, note concerns the fabulous Geir Tjelta music. It was produced in a double speed player which can generate some very funky sounds.

That's all for this month, and with any luck (and if there's any justice) I'll have more of this PD kinda thing for you next month. Until then, have a banana!

BASH YER BRAINS

The pen is mightier than the sword? Not on your horned helmet! 'Twas but last sunrise that a bloated minotaur staggered into the inn and spilt my pint of mead. I had two objects at hand — a quill, and my trusty Wilkinson sword. Which did I choose? Well, let's just say that stationary can't hack out peoples kidneys. Bah, mightier than the sword indeed.

CHAIN MAIL

Another cavern full of mail that starts with a letter from **Ben Cove** *of* **Westbury, Wilts**. Ben wrote a pleading cry for help concerning *Danger Adventure At Work* and *ZZZZ*. In *ZZZZ* he keeps getting caught for jay walking and is thrown back into the sea. In *DAAW* he hasn't been able to move the camel or the hedgepig and can't open the pub door.

You don't use the door Ben — you exit via the window with the aid of a well-aimed bar stool. The short-sighted Hedgepig wants someone to love (altogether now — ahhh). The camel may be a seamstress! (Cryptic hints courtesy of my pal Simon Avery). In *ZZZZ* you should use various forms of transport to get about. Free the Sandman from the sand and let him ride off on your bike. This way, you can thumb a lift from him later. Public transport can be used at one point, and you can even ride in a balloon!

Chris Jones of **Warrington** wants to know how you get through the gates of Hades in *Zork 1*. Well Chris, you'll only get through the gates if you die. Wandering around dead for hours is fine, but as you're a spirit, you can't pick things up or get out again. Chris also asks if *Zork II* and *Zork III* are available on tape. As far as I know, only *Zork 1* is — the others are just too big to fit!

In reply to your *DAAW* request (getting out of the pub), use the command CLIMB WINDOW.

I'm always happy to look at readers adventures, so feel free to send along the game you're creating, Chris.

Mrs Wareham of **Gillingham** is also having *DAAW* problems, mainly with Balrog on the magic bridge. All you need do is give him a computer game — he'll rush off to review it! If you can't find it, searching the Dragon location may help.

Ann Titley of **Rhymney**, is perplexed by *Majik*. Climbing the rope to the escarpment she promptly gets stuck! *Nightmare* is also proving a bit tricky — she's got nowhere at all!

In *Majik*, don't kill Boldok until you've given him the sphere — then bump him off! Don't climb the rope as it's a red herring. If Boldok is killed properly he'll drop a crystal. Show this to Capriol who'll follow and tell you a secret — take him south of the escarpment and he'll point out a secret passage. Don't be tempted to use magic unless it's vital; you won't be able to complete the game successfully. To get you started in *Nightmare* wear the Blootack, eat the vitamins, go catflap, N, E, get Can, fill can, water the bushes, climb bushes.

Finally, **Mr McTiernan** of **Purley** would like advice for *Bard's Tale 3 — The Thief Of Fate* as he can't find Sceadu and is going totally mad.

Go to the Inn in Tenebrosia and collect the container. The innkeeper will tell you (sort of) how to find Sceadu. In 'The Middle of Nowhere', place the Shadow Door on the ground, fit the Shadow Lock and you can go down to Sceadu. Remember, he's gone over to the Dark One so must be dispatched. Ahhh, all this hacking and slaying. You can't beat a good venture can you?

MINES

River Software, £2.50 tape or disk
Overseas £3.50

When I received this from *RIVER SOFTWARE* I was impressed. Games by Jack Lockerby, ably assisted by his son-in-law Roger, have always been a delight to play. All 20-odd adventures that have come from Jack's prolific pen have been excellent — *Mines Of Lithiad* is no exception! Jack has a special talent for setting just the right amount of atmosphere and manages to pack each adventure with devious puzzles without seeming to repeat himself which, considering the amount crammed in, is no mean feat. Let's take a look at his latest offering. Firstly, the plot.

The Master had a brain-storm and ordered that all dragons throughout the land be eliminated. The order was carried out and all the dragons were killed — well, nearly all. Cavilan was hidden in her cave, about to start a new generation and somehow missed the slaughter.

Word got around that one dragon remained and upon hearing this, The Master set out himself to put paid to her. Fortunately, Cavilan was out hunting for food and eluded The Master, but the swine found her egg!

It's now hidden in the Lithiad Mines in the hope that Cavilan will make a rescue attempt and fall into the awaiting trap.

Being a dragon, Cavilan is far too big to enter the mines and that is why she has chosen you — a former dragon rider — to act for her. With the promise of great riches, you set out to find the egg.

Egged on...

The adventure begins with you standing outside Cavilan's cave on Silvertooth Mountain. From there, you journey to the Valley of Lost Souls

BASHING FOR BEGINNERS

I was speaking to a friend the other day who was moaning about a coded message he couldn't solve. He was on the verge of chucking it down the north facing fissure of my cave in frustration. I don't know if many of you, upon coming across some sort of code, get the same reaction and give up. My advice is the same as with mazes (see last issue) — apply some simple logic and you'll start to enjoy them. These days, more and more programmers are including coded messages in their adventures, so perhaps the following advice may help.

The more usual type of code is a simple substitution of letters, for example, ZOPQX=DELTA. There is sometimes an added twist in that, once decoded, it must be read backwards to make sense. If it's written in strange runes or symbols, the player will usually find a strong decoding clue elsewhere in the game.

The first thing to do is make a copy of the message on a piece of paper. Use double line spacing — this way any substituted letters can be placed beneath each coded one. Examine the message carefully and always begin by checking which letter is repeated. It's a fact that the letter 'E' is used most in the English language, so if a letter keeps cropping up, try to substitute it with an 'E'. I also look out for any words of fifteen letters as this could well indicate the word 'Congratulations'. If there's an eleven letter word followed by a two letter one, this may well mean 'Combination is' — so keep an eye open. Similarly, a four letter word (not a rude one) at the start with no repeated letters could be 'Dear' — especially if it's coded. I've even come across 'To whom it may concern', which is also quite easy to spot.

To show how easy decoding can be look at this sentence: 'Boon popped free canon did boom boom roar'. Take the repeated letters in each word and it simply translates as 'open door'. Along similar lines is 'Go outstrip Pete even now we excel Lovel Lawson'. Take the last letter from each word to get 'Open well'.

I had a tough time with *Hollywood Hi-Jinx*. A plaque read 'Levy, Regan, Lebling — Safe Company, Upper Sandusky, Ohio, 1936.' By the time I'd finished, a dictionary could've been compiled with the words I'd come up with. Then, it finally hit me! Levy, Rega, Lebling were the only ones needed. Levy started with L for left and had four letters, so that was Left 4. Regan, in the same way, indicted Right 5 and Lebling meant Left 7. So be warned — sometimes you can think a code is far more complex than it really is.

I hope this will help remove the mystery surrounding codes; you may even begin to like them.

That's all the advice for this month so TATTY TRUMPETS FLUFF ANYONE!

TREASURE CHEST

Yet another fantastic special offer from **The Guild**. This time, Tony Collins is offering **Cursed Be The City** and **Atalan** at £1 off the usual price of £4. Please state either tape or disk when ordering. Overseas readers should pay the usual price to cover extra postage and packing.

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ES OF LITHIAD

and a lot of exploration. Right from the start the puzzles are well thought out, enjoyable and intriguing. How, for instance, do you get water to the dehydrated man?

Nice touches regularly appear giving a feeling of authenticity. Patience also has its rewards — it often pays to hang around certain locations in order to gain something to your advantage.

Deep underground, you'll have endless amounts of fun figuring out winches, turn-tables and barges — fascinating problems for the most hardy adventurer. Solve them, and you'll feel a real sense of achievement. Personally, I enjoyed the original touches. One knapsack in particular was the most unusual object I've ever come across! It truly wet a jaded appetite.

Written with the aid of *The Quill*, it's a text-only adventure and runs very smoothly. The parser is very friendly — I hardly ever got stuck trying to find the correct input, and even when I did, examining things usually provided the required clue.

If you've never played a **RIVER** adventure before you're really in for a treat — go on, spoil yourself.

FORCE FACTOR 79%

It's well worth sending for a RIVER SOFTWARE catalogue, as Jack has promised 20% price discounts for those who mention COMMODORE FORCE when ordering two or more games. You can't say fairer than that!

That's all there's room for this month. Your letters are already being hand delivered over treacherous lands as I speak. Keep on writing and if you'd like a personal reply don't forget to enclose a stamped, self addressed envelope. May you boots forever be bound in leather.

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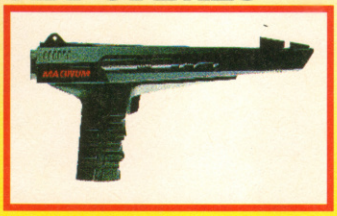

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Some people feel, as they grow older and begin to wrinkle (and become more out of touch) that they'd like to turn back the clock. In certain cases they're sad enough to have a face-lift, in the strange belief that it'll make them more acceptable. Here at COMMODORE FORCE we're as fresh and lively as ever — and we're raring to bring you another naturally wonderful issue! Here's what to expect next month...

RAVE REVIEWS!

ROBOCOD

Forget to feed the fish and join James Pond in his latest deep-sea dive.

THE REEL THING

And you thought THIS months stuff was cool! Prepare to be amazed, with some scorching high-percentage earners. Does 91 and 94 percent sound good to you? A multi-player arcade conversion? Scorching demos? Just wait and see...

BACK TO THE FEATURE

The time-traveling continues, with an in-depth visit to 1986.

LIVERPOOL

Wave your scarfs out the car window, and clack those clackers, coz the latest footy sim is about to score.

...NOT THE EXCUSES!

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